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ABSTRACT

To describe and evaluate current practices in college composition programs, a study was conducted of the 19 California State University campuses. English department chairs completed a short survey on courses, staffing, and special projects, and structured interviews were conducted with these chairs and various other program coordinators from a subsample of 10 campuses. All writing instructors inside and outside the English departments completed a detailed questionnaire about such features as instructional practices and campus climate. From the interview data, five broad categories emerged for comparing writing programs: program goals, program leadership, procedures and policies for remedial writing instruction, adjunct writing assistance, and upper-division writing requirements for graduation. The questionnaire data provided descriptive information about writing teachers and their attitudes, practices, and perceptions. The results indicated that few campuses had defined program goals or cohesive sequential curricula. The results also suggested that tenured faculty knew less about recent writing theory than did part time contract instructors, and that program coordinators' authority and power of persuasion over regular faculty were limited. (HTH)

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ED239292

RESEARCH IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF WRITING

NIE-G-81-0011

FINAL REPORT ON PHASE I

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CS 208 106

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

Research in Effective Teaching of Writing

Phase I Final Report

Volume I

Edward M. White, Project Director
Linda G. Polin, Associate Director

Research Team

Ronald S. Basich, The California State University, Chancellor's Office
Kim Flachmann, California State College, Bakersfield
Charles Moore, California State University, Sacramento
David Rankin, California State University, Dominguez Hills
William Stryker, California State University, Northridge

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The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of The California State University or its campuses.

Research in Effective Teaching of Writing

Abstract of Final Report on Phase I

This study is designed to meet the need for systematic description and evaluation of current practices in college composition programs. While much has been written about investigations of elementary and secondary school student writers and teachers of writing, comparatively little research has explored the larger, programmatic nature of college writing instruction. Because so little work has been done in this area, this research project was planned in phases to meet three sets of research goals: Phase I, to obtain and organize descriptions of program practices and variables affecting those practices; Phase II, to obtain student and faculty "outcome" data and relate those data to varieties in practice; and Phase III, to integrate Phase I and II findings into meaningful recommendations for composition faculty and program administrators, and to relate findings to current theory and knowledge about writing instruction and postsecondary education. This report describes Phase I work and results to date.

The study sample makes use of the nineteen campuses of The California State University (CSU). This sample includes rural, suburban, and urban campuses, with predominantly Anglo as well as ethnically-mixed student populations, and large, medium, and small enrollments. The CSU system has focused special attention on writing skills in two highly visible ways. First, there is the systemwide required English Placement Test for entering freshmen and many transfer students; the placement test is supported by a legislative mandate to provide special funds to each campus for its admitted students who fall below a criterion score and are thereby identified as in need of remediation. Second, all degree candidates must be certified by their campus as competent writers at the upper-division level in order to receive the degree.

In gathering descriptive information, the project made use of several different methods and sources. Factual information on English department courses was obtained by asking English department chairs to complete a short survey asking about such matters as courses, staffing, and special projects. On a subsample of ten campuses structured interviews were conducted with English chairs, composition program coordinators, remedial instruction coordinators, non-English department writing program coordinators, learning assistance center directors, educational opportunity program coordinators of writing assistance, school deans, and academic vice presidents. All writing instructors, in and outside the English department, received a detailed questionnaire about

instructional practices, perceptions of the writing program, the campus climate for writing instruction, current writing theory, remediation, the upper-division writing requirement, and a variety of department and campus variables potentially influencing the writing program.

Two kinds of analyses were performed on the Phase I data. First, interview transcripts were coded and reviewed in an effort to group campus programs which appeared similar in a particular coding category. These categories were then refined through discussions and reanalysis of interview passages, supplemented by information from the factual survey. Second, questionnaire responses were tabulated and factor analyses were run on a subset of items. These analyses established one set of factors describing perceptions of the writing program and its campus context, and a second set describing instructional perspectives.

From the interview data, five broad categories emerged as useful ways of talking about similarities and differences in writing programs: program goals, composition program leadership, procedures and policies for remedial writing instruction, adjunct writing assistance (outside the English department class), and procedures and policies for the upper-division writing requirement for graduation. The ten-campus interview sample demonstrates considerable variation within each of the five categories. Surprisingly, in most instances, campus programs which group together within a category are not necessarily similar in terms of their campus sampling characteristics such as size or ethnic mix. Features of writing program organization and management, for example, do not appear to be related to features of the campus setting.

The questionnaire data provided descriptive information about writing teachers and about their attitudes, practices, and perceptions. Factor analysis of Likert and forced-choice items yielded six program factors and seven instructional factors. The program factors are (1) campus climate for writing instruction, (2) student context, (3) adjunct writing assistance, (4) program leadership, (5) cohesiveness of the composition program, (6) faculty attitude, and (7) faculty effort. The instructional practice factors are (1) the literature approach, (2) the composing process approach, (3) the rhetorical modes approach, (4) the basic skills approach, (5) the in-class workshop approach, and (6) the service course approach.

The first chapters of this volume present the conceptual work developed by the faculty research team and suggestions for practical uses of this report. Results of interview and questionnaire analyses comprise the major portion of the document. Subsequent reports will give the results of the evaluative and theoretical phases.

PHASE I FINAL REPORT

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Appendix I

A. Faculty Questionnaire
B. Campus Fact Sheet
C. Interview Protocols
D. Taxonomy of Writing Program Variables

Appendix II

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CHAPTER ONE

Objectives and Practical Uses of This Report

Objectives

National concern over the apparent inability of students to write with competence has been so widespread in recent years that it hardly requires documentation. While traditionally directed at the grade and high schools, more and more of this concern is directed to postsecondary institutions. The installation of graduation requirements in writing skills for university systems in California, New York, Georgia, and elsewhere, and the spread of basic skills proficiency tests for teaching credential candidates in many states, testify to an underlying belief that too many college graduates cannot write well enough. Meanwhile the expansion of the college population to include students who have not in the past been able to attend has added major responsibilities for pre-college training in writing to many university curricula.

Although postsecondary institutions, and particularly the English departments in these institutions, have been striving to meet the new challenges, the state of knowledge about collegiate composition instruction remains inadequate to the task, though a growing body of research encourages the belief that help is on the way. With a million or more

students seeking freshman composition instruction each year, directors of programs in writing instruction have had little research to look to as they tried to mobilize slim resources and (generally) inexperienced and thinly trained faculty to teach in their particular settings. As E. D. Hirsch (1977) states in The Philosophy of Composition, "Our most urgent problem...[is] the lack of direction in our teaching and research. We are beset by conflicting ideologies which confuse us and hamper progress in both domains." Douglas B. Park, writing in the September 1979 issue of College English on "Theoretical Expectations: on Conceiving Composition and Rhetoric as a Discipline", amplifies the same point:

> What composition studies now offer is a potpourri of theory, research, speculation, some of it close to pedagogy, some far removed, some of it speculative and contemplative, some scientifically and experimentally oriented, some of it jargon-riddled and pretentious, enough of it so provoking and stimulating that the pervading sense of excitement and challenge seems justified. What composition research does not offer is a shapely coherence that makes it definable as a discipline.

As a result of this theoretical and pedagogical incoherence, professionals interested in developing effective writing instruction programs have been faced with a variety of discordant theories to guide practice, none of which seems to generalize convincingly beyond the limited populations upon which it was developed. For example, a theory of composition which calls for intensive writing exercises with

minimal direct guidance might work well with well-trained preparatory school graduates, but might be quite inappropriate for educationally disadvantaged students whose fundamental reading difficulties block writing in general.

The objective of this project is to provide to researchers, composition program directors, and composition policy makers a coherent framework for ordering or planning writing instruction activities heretofore left largely to personal experience or historical accident. Until in-depth descriptions of program options are available for different populations in different college instructional settings, those responsible for composition programs lack an essential resource for making program decisions. Until reliable data about the relative success of these program options are available, writing programs are likely to develop not as a result of effective planning but as a matter of chance. And until writing theory can be enriched by systematic evaluation of practice, an important aspect of composition research will remain so weak that conclusions in the field will remain merely theoretical.

This report describes the results of the first eighteen months of a three-year research study. This first phase was aimed at accumulating and organizing descriptive information on college composition programs on the nineteen campuses of The California State University, a large system of higher education with sufficient variety of students, faculty,

campus programs, and campus environments to encompass most of the issues relating to writing instruction programs in American colleges and universities in general.

Practical Uses of This Report

> 'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
> Go just alike but each believes his own.
> -Alexander Pope

Descriptive information about college writing programs can be of particular use to those charged with responsibility for directing such programs, normally chairs of English departments or composition coordinators. Our findings show that such individuals can usually structure or restructure composition programs if they wish, though sometimes a reorganization calls for a major expenditure of effort. It is our hope and expectation that the descriptive materials in this report will assist all those concerned about the structure of college-level writing programs. We also expect to publish subsequent reports evaluating the relative effectiveness of the program features described in this report, for different kinds of students and institutions, in order to increase the usefulness of the research.

Anyone seeking to use these materials in relation to an existing composition program will most naturally begin with an examination of the present program structure, using the taxonomy described in Chapter Seven as a guide. It seems apparent that most composition programs are more complex than they appear to be. In fact, sometimes those people

working in quite complex programs have little conscious awareness of the program structure which establishes the ground for their work. The structured interviews reproduced in the Appendix, particularly those for the composition chair and the English chair, may be of use in uncovering all the parts of a composition program. These structured interviews are based on the taxonomy, and seek to develop the information the taxonomy defines as the most important.

Thus, the descriptive materials presented in this report offer a systematic and coherent approach to program feature analysis. Most composition programs, it appears, have grown incrementally, according to the special interests of temporary administrators or program faculty, and it is rare to find any such program reviewed as a whole.

This report not only offers the taxonomy (along with the structured interviews and Fact Sheet for developing information systematically), but it also sets out the wide variety of program options now in use in our sample group of campuses. Thus, the report suggests a range of choices among program features, each in use on a campus, each with its defenders and support. It is healthy, if a bit surprising, to notice that what appears to one composition director as the only perfectly natural and appropriate way to cope with an issue may not seem so at all to his or her counterparts elsewhere. Thus, one campus may assign low-scoring Black students to course work in an Afro-American Studies department,

on the grounds that homogenous racial groupings will provide support for student improvement in writing. Another campus, believing that homogenous racial groupings create or support negative labeling, may place such students in an integrated remedial writing course, with special support services. Yet another campus may carry that argument even further by avoiding remedial course work altogether, but asking low-scoring students to add special support services as part of their work in regular freshman composition courses. As with Pope's observation about watches in the Essay on Criticism, "none go just alike but each believes his own." It is humbling and eye-opening to realize that what seems obviously right to one's self seems quite wrong to one's colleagues.

The descriptive materials presented in this report thus offer to program administrators several ways of seeing and organizing their programs, and an array of alternative structures now in use. While the evaluative data to emerge in the next phase of the research should be valuable, this report should, in its own right, stimulate and help shape such program review.

The interview data summarized briefly in Chapter Eight also offer a great deal of useful information, even though much of this material remains to be considered in a separate report. For example, departments considering faculty development programs in composition will profit from the knowledge that none of the sample campuses has yet found a successful

direct way to involve tenured faculty in such training, and that informal rather than formal procedures seem to produce the best results.

The preliminary analysis of the faculty survey provides additional useful information. For the first time in writing research, detailed reports are available from the tenured faculty, whose goals and procedures in class are generally respected so highly that no one ever discovers what they are. The survey data show how certain clusters of attitudes correlate with certain classroom practices, and how different theories of writing instruction are given life in the writing class. Preliminary factor analysis of methods of composition instruction, for example, developed six patterns for such classes, which we named as follows: 1) the literature approach, 2) the composing process approach, 3) the rhetorical modes approach, 4) the basic skills approach, 5) the in-class workshop approach, and 6) the service course approach. While we do not yet have any information on the comparative effectiveness of these approaches for different kinds of students, it is certainly interesting to see that these groupings allow us to describe inclusively so large and various a faculty sample.

As the research continues, we expect to produce specialized reports for the various audiences which will want to make use of our work: the educational research community, the national English composition community, The

California State University, among others. At the same time, we will be proceeding with the second phase of our research, during which we will be using a complex series of outcome measures with a large student sample; our goal will be to discover, define, and compare the effectiveness of the writing program features described in this report. Subsequent reports will detail our progress and our findings. Meanwhile, this comprehensive report to our funding agency offers an overview of the theoretical and practical work so far accomplished, in the hope that this work will be of use to those involved in the teaching of or research in college composition.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

What Do We Know About College Writing Programs?

This research project was designed to meet the need for information about college-level programs in composition. Program administrators need to know what kinds of program choices exist, and how those choices have worked in particular institutional settings, with specific student and staff populations. In searching the educational research and the English education literatures, we found little such knowledge available, and a goodly proportion of that literature given over to reports of the successes and failures of specific curricular or service programs, i.e., individual program descriptions and evaluations. The problem with these course descriptions and evaluations is that their usefulness in other contexts is always in doubt.

A few reports, described below, are more general in scope and provide some insight into the issues and important factors to consider in an examination of any program of writing instruction. These studies have sought to describe the national scene in college English, most often through national survey data and selective interviews. We do not find any attempts to validate or evaluate these descriptions of program features in terms of actual impact or success in

teaching students to write better. Thus, they stop short of providing the sort of data-based recommendations that can help composition directors, committees, department chairs, college administrators, and instructors make decisions among a range of options whose success may be closely linked to particular settings or policies or personnel.

One of the earliest studies of college composition was published in 1963. The Albert Kitzhaber report on college composition begins with a discussion of the contradictory goals or purposes that may be perceived as guiding the curriculum and instruction in college writing courses. Kitzhaber describes "therapy" programs as those which take as their mission remedying the ill-prepared entering freshman student, thus providing a "service" to the students and for the faculty in other departments by teaching these students to write with "reasonable ease, precision, and correctness." The second theme underlying college composition is concerned with cognitive development rather than correctness. From this perspective, composition programs are "to focus the students' attention on fundamental principles of clear thinking and the clear and effective written expression of that thinking, and to give him disciplined practice in the principles."

These two perspectives on composition programs suggest differences in locating the responsibility for teaching students to be competent college writers. In the first

case, where writing instruction is performed as a service, primary responsibility for the success of this service is normally left to the English department. In the second case, where writing instruction is part of the general intellectual training received in college, there is the expectation that other courses in other departments should "foster the same discipline but direct it toward the varying demands of the specific subject matters."

In addition to these contrasting views of writing instruction purposes and responsibilities, Kitzhaber identifies the variety of English department specialities in all but writing that usually guide writing programs because of the particular expertise of the department chair or composition director: semantics, logic, rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and literary criticism. He also points out the lack of "proof" of the cause-effect relationship between instructional activities derived from any of these particular themes and gains in student achievement. He describes difficulties that await prospective researchers because of their inability to identify or control effects due to the variety of intervening variables in students' history and experiences and effects from the particular personality traits and teaching competencies of instructors. Further, he raises the issue of sensitivity and validity of measures of student gains in competence as a result of freshman composition.

After discussing these issues and problems, Kitzhaber reports the results of his own data gathering effort, the purpose of which was to describe the variety in writing programs offered in American four-year universities. Kitzhaber collected syllabi from 95 universities and analyzed those guidelines in terms of the expressed goals, content, progression in instructional content, and texts. Interested in the veracity of these "syllabi," he paid follow-up visits to eighteen of the campuses to determine the extent to which courses were implemented as described.

Most notable from the analyses of syllabi were the variety of approaches to writing instruction, the lack of rigor and scholarliness evident in the selection of texts for composition as compared to the standard fare for other college courses, and the apparent lack of confidence in the competence of instructors. Further, he found that campus size was a key factor determining staffing patterns, particularly in the use of part-time instructors and lecturers.

Kitzhaber's work is valuable less for its descriptive information, the validity of which may no longer hold, than for its identification of key variables that ought to be considered in the investigation of college writing programs. Clearly, campus size and the philosophy or goals of the composition program are important factors in determining what takes place in classrooms and who is doing the teaching. He also suggests attention to the following: training of

staff, texts, amount of writing assigned, where writing is done (in class or out), and the direction, structure, and guidance given to students.

A decade later, Thomas Wilcox conducted "The National Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English," sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and funded by the U.S. Office of Education. Like Kitzhaber, Wilcox (1973) collected survey data (questionnaires from English department heads) and interview data. While Wilcox studied composition programs, he did so as part of his larger concern with the administration of English department programs and the operation of English departments within the college context. His survey data describe the makeup of department staffs in terms of status categories and the reward systems in operation for those staffs. He notes the influence of campus size, as this size dictates staffing demands. On the larger campuses he finds the need for specialists in literary fields, the desire for distinguished "scholars in the field [of literature]," the overuse of cheap labor for writing instruction available from part-time and nontenure-track appointments and graduate assistants. On the smaller campuses, he notes the need for generalists, the emphasis on effective teaching rather than publishing, and the tendency toward "top-heaviness" characterized by a predominantly stable, tenured staff isolated from "new ideas and enthusiasms" such as those associated with newer, younger staff members.

Where Kitzhaber concentrated upon course content and instruction in composition, Wilcox concentrates his reporting on the administrative properties of English departments, with the implicit assumption that these characteristics and decisions also affect the nature of instruction. The key departmental issues he identifies include department autonomy, teacher evaluation, staffing, and philosophies underlying composition and remedial courses. Like Kitzhaber, Wilcox recognizes a relationship between campus size and staffing patterns, and between philosophies about writing instruction and the organization and content of writing courses. The new information in the Wilcox study concerns the evaluation of instructors and the organization of writing courses.

In describing information on teacher evaluation, Wilcox raises two issues: desired characteristics and their measurement. His survey data suggest some degree of consensus about the characteristics evaluators seek in instructors. The two descriptions receiving endorsement by more than 75% of the Wilcox sample are 1) "stimulation and motivation," and 2) "knowledge and mastery of the subject matter." Following these two values, the remaining three top selections are 3) "fresh ideas and critical insights" (45%), 4) "enthusiasm and interest" (40%), and 5) "rapport with students" (39%). Surprisingly, the five most valued teacher traits suggest a greater interest in the general characteristics of good teachers than in specialized competence or particular knowledge and philosophies.

Given these characteristics sought in instructors, Wilcox asked his department administrators about the measurement of these qualities. Here he describes the basic problem of "how to obtain reliable and accurate evidence of what actually occurs in each instructor's classroom." The most common source of information cited by the survey respondents was informal personal contact with the instructors (93%). The second most common answer was the review of assignments, exams, and teaching materials (51%). Interestingly, student evaluations of instructors were cited by only 40% of the respondents and class observations by only 36%. Other choices revealed by the survey included informal contacts with students, student-published evaluations of staff, solicited colleague opinions, comparisons in grading among instructors for the same course, and behaviors during department meetings.

Wilcox also inquired into the question of course organization. Wilcox asked his survey population the degree of course uniformity across instructors and how this comparability was achieved. From his findings it appears clear that course consistency is very general indeed and rarely enforced. Top among the choices for methods of establishing course uniformity are the following: staff meetings (68%), use of syllabi (62%), common texts decided upon by committee (62%), and less popularly, common exams (22%), common lectures (12%), and common theme grading (1.2%). For Wilcox, these

findings lead to the unanswered question of whether or not there is "a right, true, or best in teaching English."

In his focus upon composition, Wilcox reports much the same emphases and distinctions in his sample of department administrators as does Kitzhaber, though the two studies are a decade apart in time. Again, the issue of "service and therapy" versus broader intellectual goals in writing instruction is mentioned. Wilcox expands upon Kitzhaber's terms, describing the growth beyond simple therapy for the ill-prepared students, to "exercising and educating . . . coaching students for future occasions which may demand the use of language and confronting them with present occasions which require the use of all their mental faculties." Wilcox also presents data on the growth in needed, clearly remedial coursework. These courses are described by Wilcox as predominantly a matter of practice and drill in mechanics with writing limited to paragraphs done in class and with texts limited to "junior high school primers" or comparable lightweight fare.

While these two studies, Kitzhaber (1963) and Wilcox (1973), are landmarks in their sparse field of inquiry, they pre-date the "revolution" in writing instruction occasioned by the sudden growth in interest in and instructional research and theory about "the writing process." Thus, their information may be vulnerable to charges of obsolescence. Fortunately, similar work is currently in progress at the University of Texas at Austin (Witte, Meyer, Miller, Faigley, 1981).

The Austin research team is primarily interested in the development of evaluation guidelines and methods for colleges to use in evaluating composition programs. A preliminary activity in their development project has been a national survey of college composition program administrators. This national profile includes and distinguishes results from two- and four-year colleges, and public and private universities. Witte, et al., have reported the range of practices in 1) writing course content and sequence, 2) staffing and writing courses, 3)textbooks and materials, 4) instructional activities, 5) student evaluation and proficiency testing, and 6) faculty evaluation and development. Again, as in the Kitzhaber and Wilcox studies, institutional size seemed to be a clear factor in distinguishing among actual practices in these six areas.[1]

The update of instructional information is remarkably unremarkable given the serious changes that have occurred in theory and research-based recommendations for instructional activities to foster the students' awareness of writing as process. For example, the Austin data describe the continued popularity of grammar and rhetoric texts in beginning composition in both two-year and four-year colleges or universities; the only real distinction is that universities also report greater use of non-fiction anthologies.

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[1]The August 1981 report on the Writing Program Assessment Project presents descriptive data only; no statistical analyses are included.

The new information on staffing is perhaps more interesting because of the care with which the Austin team has distinguished among faculty status categories. The result of their care has been the acquisition of data supporting some of the current, otherwise unsupported opinions about differences in writing instruction traceable to differences in staff status. For example, the data reveal disparities in faculty development opportunities for full-time, tenured and nontenure-track faculty. This finding further demonstrates some evidence of interaction with the size of the institution, most likely because the larger institutions employ a greater number of part-time or full-time, nontenure-track instructors. The universities seemed to be doing the most for all categories of staffing, though slightly more energy was directed toward the part-timers. Two-year colleges, on the other hand, aim most of their workshop activity toward the tenured and tenure-track full-timers.

Another particularly relevant aspect of the Austin survey data is the self-report by composition program directors on the successes of their programs. Several program components were mentioned over and over by the questionnaire respondents. These included 1) the independent writing lab, 2) teacher training efforts, 3) peer tutoring and other collaborative learning, and 4) placement procedures. The respondents also listed a fairly consistent set of "successful outcomes" for their programs, including 1) teaching students to write

clear, effective prose for different audiences, 2) getting teachers to teach writing as a process, and 3) involving tenured faculty in teaching writing.

Of the seven successful outcomes most often cited, four relate to program policy and organization. Clearly these program-level decisions can have impact upon instructional success; and just as clearly, program outcomes encompass more than student gains.

> That relatively few directors cited any one successful aspect of college writing programs suggests that those programs vary considerably from one institutional context to another, from one department to another, from one director to another....we also found considerable evidence of a variety of approaches to writing program administration, with some directors investing considerable energy in one area while others focus on another area.... If the contexts for writing programs differ from one institution to another, it is difficult to say--on the basis of the statements we read--in what aspects of writing programs, directors around the country ought to invest their energies.
> (Witte, Meyer, Miller, Faigley, 1981, pp. 103-104)

Relationship of Our Phase I Findings to the Related Literature

The three studies described above report on the state of English composition programs at three junctures in time, 1963, 1973, and 1981. They have each attempted to portray the spectrum of actual practices in several areas of program operations, such as staffing patterns, course content and texts, student and faculty evaluation, and faculty development. Each of these studies relied almost exclusively upon responses to multiple-choice questionnaire items for accumulating data, though Kitzhaber and Wilcox also sought backup interview data

on a small subsample of cases. Further, each of these studies confined their sample to composition program or English department data.

Our own Phase I data also were derived from questionnaire and interview. However, we intentionally began with the interviewing of a variety of administrators, including English department chairs, composition program directors, remedial course directors, learning and/or tutoring center directors, heads of writing programs under the auspices of Chicano, Pan-African, or Asian studies departments, Deans of Arts and Sciences or of Schools of Humanities and Academic Vice Presidents. We believe that this wealth of perspective has allowed us to better understand the institutional context within which the writing programs operate. This is the very concern cited by the Austin team (at the close of the previous section).

Further, our interviews with program directors indicated that their knowledge of instructional practices among writing program staff tends to be limited to part-time or nontenure-track instructors and graduate assistants. Tenured and tenure-track faculty appear to be unsupervised and largely unevaluated for their composition teaching. Clearly this calls into question the generalizability of the questionnaire and interview data of all three studies described above.

To address this concern, we have developed a survey questionnaire for the faculty teaching writing both within and outside of English departments.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that, unlike its predecessors, our study had been planned to venture beyond description into comparative analyses. In Phase II we will be looking for outcomes in the broadest sense of the word, particularly given the broad goals of college-level writing instruction and the previously ignored "side effects" any program has upon its environment.

What Do We Know About Evaluating Writing Programs?

Two recent reports bear upon our goals and methodology. Davis, Scriven, and Thomas (1981) combine the issues pertaining to evaluation in general with those arising in the evaluation of writing instruction programs. Davis, et al., write on this topic from their direct and frustrating experience of trying to "evaluate" the "outcomes" of the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) for writing teachers and their students. Michael Scriven lent his particular evaluation expertise to the task but could not develop conclusive findings; according to the funding agency, the Carnegie Corporation, "at the end of their work, the Scriven team delivered no less than 32 separate reports on BAWP activities, none of which was able to present direct cause-and-effect statistics."[1] No doubt, based upon their experiences in evaluating BAWP impact, Davis, Scriven, and Thomas recommend an evaluation agenda and discuss evaluation issues and problems for writing, a particularly difficult subject area for measurement.

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[1] "Teaching and Learning the Art of Composition: The Bay Area Writing Project," Carnegie Quarterly, 1979, volume XXVII, number 2, page 7.

The first of these problem areas is validity in both the methodology and measures. In his chapter on the basic evaluation concepts, Scriven notes:

> ...in the evaluation of composition instruction there has been a most serious failure to deal with the most central aspect of the issue of validity. To understand why this has occurred, it is essential to understand the peculiar status of mastery of an instrumental intellectual skill like writing or reading or reasoning or speaking Spanish, by contrast with mastery of a substantive intellectual subject like English literature or the history of philosophy or special relativity theory. The skills are in some sense content-free--loosely speaking, they represent knowing how to do something without knowing that something is the case. The first problem that affects validity arises from the terrible temptation to try to convert the skill into a subject, because subjects are easier to talk about, to teach, and to test.... So the evaluator should take great care not to confuse content knowledge with instrumental skills.
> (Davis, Scriven, & Thomas, 1981, p.37)

For Scriven, this distinction in the nature of the instructional content of writing has ramifications for assessment of instruction and instructional gains in writing skill. For example, he appeals to teachers and evaluators to pay careful attention to topic and rating systems used in assessing student skills by essay sample. Throughout their text, the authors emphasize a broader domain of writing instruction than has traditionally been studied. Citing the recent plethora of research on individual cognitive processes in writing and on process-oriented instruction,[2] the authors

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[2]See for example: Bereiter, Scardamalia, & Bracewell, 1979; Bruce, Collins, Rubin, & Gentner, 1978; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Nold, 1980. These citations are expanded in the Bibliography following this chapter.

argue for attention to other valuable components in successful writing: 1) motivation, 2) linguistic competence, 3) audience sensitivity, 4) understanding the demands of different rhetorical purposes, 5) competence in the composing and revising processes, and 6) competence in developing and applying metaplans or strategies to complete the writing task. This broader perspective in instruction and learning requires that assessment as well reach beyond student writing performance to include indicators of attitudes and beliefs about writing and follow-up indicators such as subsequent course enrollments and grades.

Beyond the increased validity of the evaluation design, there are several advantages to including these indicators:

> ...growth in writing occurs slowly; changes are more noticeable at two- or four-year intervals than during the course of a semester. Further, attitude changes often precede improvement in skills and can be considered short-term indicators of possible future changes. ...And, measuring students' attitudes and beliefs about writing can provide a richer understanding--potential explanations--of more subtle program effects. Attitude measures thus allow us to take into account some important aspects of learning processes.
>
> (Davis, Scriven, & Thomas, 1981, p.95)

After student-centered changes in writing, thinking, and attitudes, the next set of items on the Davis, et al., evaluation agenda focuses on teachers, their background, training and beliefs, and their teaching methods. The traditional evaluation design ignores these matters and their potential usefulness to the teaching profession.

"It ignores the potential for evaluation procedures to act as powerful tools in program improvement and staff development." Among the kinds of teacher-centered variables recommended, Davis, et al., discuss 1) classroom procedures, 2) responses to student writing, 3) writing assignments, 4) expectancies for students' learning, 5) knowledge of composition theory, 6) philosophy of composition, 7) professional activities and leadership roles, and 8) formal training. While some of these teacher-oriented data directly tap into the classroom process, others are of interest as they might affect teachers' decision-making with regard to curriculum, materials, and methods.

The third category of agenda items includes program administration and unintended outcomes from the program. The first of these issues suggests a policy focus, that is, the utility of particular kinds of evaluative information for making policy decisions about programs. The key dimensions in this area cover the educational and institutional context of the program and the administrative responsibilities for it.

Educational and institutional context should attempt to characterize the setting in which the program operates by describing the supports supplied by larger educational units (department, school, college). These resources can be of many types: fiscal, personnel, physical facilities, incentives. In addition to investigating system supports, a thorough

program evaluation must consider the constraints which operate on the program. These may take the form of fiscal constraints, restrictive policies and staff limitations.

When Davis, et al., speak of administrative responsibilities, they include the structures for communication within the program as well as between program and institution. These structures may be active committees, regular meetings, or other forums for communicating ideas and problems, finding solutions, and formulating policies and plans. Also an administrative concern is the ongoing development or maintenance of staff skills through faculty development or in-house evaluations.

The second issue, unintended outcomes, is an often overlooked aspect of program evaluation. The Davis, Scriven, and Thomas team refer to these unplanned results as "side effects":

> The search for side effects underscores the importance of looking at what a program has actually done, not what it has intended...it's important... to find out whether they have succeeded in what they have been trying to do. But goals shouldn't be the sole focus of an evaluation. They may be too vague, too easy to attain. The focus of an evaluation should be on what the program accomplished, whether intended or not.
> (Davis, Scriven, & Thomas, 1981, p. 142)

Uncovering the side effects is difficult since they are clearly not a conscious, documented part of the program. The key to tapping into these results is in allowing for input on topics other than those included in program goals.

Open-ended questions, observations and interviews can pick up incidents or circumstances whose occurrence or nature shares some relationship to the existence of the program. A common, beneficial side effect of an innovative program is what is called the "spread of effect." That is, often the program is able to exert an influence on people outside the program staff and participants. This often occurs where the program operates in close proximity to other, regular instructional units. For example, where the composition program operates within the English department, or where composition staff share facilities with staff from other humanities departments, we might find greater interest, support, and involvement in "writing across the disciplines" by outside faculty. Another noticeable "spread of effect" might be gains in the knowledge about composition research and theory as recently graduated lecturers interact with regular tenured literature faculty who have been forced to share the composition instruction load.

The Davis, Scriven, and Thomas work is an outstanding aid to the evaluation of composition programs because of the careful elaboration of target issues and their measurement. However, their work seems focused almost entirely upon student and teacher outcomes. This reflects the predominant interest in the composition field, elementary and secondary school instruction. At the postsecondary level, instruction programs are under greater influence from the several layers

of administration above them and from the competing needs and interests of other departments around them.

Thus, though the Davis, et al., recommendations are necessary, they are not sufficient for describing the range of program issues in postsecondary composition instruction. Interestingly, that study is complemented by our last source of program evaluation recommendations, the Rand study of innovative elementary and secondary school programs (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Berman, Greenwood, McLaughlin, & Pincus, 1975). The Rand study aimed at discovering the salient factors that determined the succussful continuation of innovative programs funded with federal seed money. In doing so, the study uncovered patterns of success that suggest a theoretical model, "a model of educational change." The key element in this model is a process referred to as "mutual adaptation." It is this model and the mutual adaptation process, specifically, that we find complete our understanding of factors affecting program effectiveness.

Berman and McLaughlin base their model on three categories or factors as these categories affect program operations. These categories are 1) federal input, 2) project characteristics, and 3) institutional setting. Clearly, contextual influences are more important in this perspective than they were in the Davis, Scriven, and Thomas recommendations for evaluation.

The federal input category concerns the regulations and policies attached to the award of funds, as well as the quantity of funds themselves. Other funding agency inputs might include provision of technical assistance or other supportive resources. Curiously, differences in the funding did not relate to project success, whether that success was measured as teacher change, student gains, or simple continuation of the project.

Berman and McLaughlin describe project characteristics in their second set of categories, which expand the usual conceptualization of programs. The Rand model includes goals, methods, and materials under the rubric of "educational methods." "Scope of change" describes the breadth and depth of the innovation, that is, the "type of change required in teaching practice, and the amount of extra effort required of teachers." While differences in educational methods did not yield any significance as an indicator of project success, the scope of change attempted was very much an indicator.

> ...our data indicate that teachers rise to challenges. Ambitious and demanding innovations seem more likely to elicit the commitment of teachers than routine projects. This is so in part because these projects appeal to the teachers' professionalism...
> (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p.25)

A corollary to this finding revealed that project staff need to have a clear understanding of their objectives in the project. This effect of clarity turns up in the implementation of the project. For the Rand researchers, this clarity was not achieved by written statements, but rather

through careful preparation of the staff for carrying out project activities: "practical, concrete training activities that permit project staff to understand the significance of project precepts as they apply them to their own classrooms."

The third category of project characteristics describes the implementation of project operations. Perhaps most interesting here are the strategies that proved ineffective. Many of these are familiar and popular, despite their ineffectiveness: 1) use of outside consultants, 2) packaged management approaches, 3) one-shot, preimplementation training, 4) pay for training, 5) formal evaluations, and 6) comprehensive applications (breadth of scope of change).

In contrast, a group of less popular strategies were found to produce "major, positive effects on project outcomes and continuation": 1) concrete, "hands-on" training, ongoing throughout the life of the project, 2) classroom assistance from project or local district staff, 3) observation of similar projects in other settings, 4) regular project meetings, 5) teacher participation in decision making for the project, 6) local materials development, and 7) principal (administrator) participation in training. These strategies do not guarantee success; the Rand researchers are quick to point out that these strategies must be well executed on site.

There is a clear theme in the two lists of successful and ineffective implementation strategies. Where there is

"local ownership" or "investment" in the project operations, there is a climate for success, a climate of motivation, support, knowledge, and patience or tolerance for the hard times and demands that accompany any major systematic innovation. Where outsiders are brought in as experts, where there is little room for participation either because of prepackaged materials, or inadequate training and knowledge, and where the changes are too sweeping, there is less commitment to and effort in project implementation, and greater confusion and demoralization among project staff.

In the third major category of variables affecting project success, Berman and McLaughlin describe the complex contextual issues of the "institutional setting" in which the innovation exists. It is this category of variables describing the local institutional setting that had "the major influence on project outcomes and continuation." These variables covered 1) organizational climate and leadership, 2) school and teacher characteristics, and 3) management capacity and support from local district administration.

Organizational climate refers to the quality of the relationship among project staff and local administrators. Sharing ideas and working as a unified team helped project teachers maintain a "critical mass that could overcome both task and emotional needs," i.e., created a working support group. In addition to support from project colleagues, the active support of principals, i.e., local on-site administration, vastly improved the likelihood of success for the

project in meeting its goals, in trouble-free implementation, and in maintenance beyond the start-up year. The key here is "active":

> The principal's unique contribution to implementation lies not in "how to do it" advice better offered by project directors, but in giving moral support to the staff and in creating an organizational climate that gives the project "legitimacy." This role is particularly demanding for ambitious projects...[which] can be viewed as a radical and undesirable departure from the school norm unless the principal actively supports them and runs interference.
>
> (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p.31)

Berman and McLaughlin find the roles of principal and project director crucial to project success, but in different phases. When the project is starting up and staff must acquire new skills and attitudes, the project director's leadership and subject area competence greatly affect the success of the implementation phase, of starting up and regularizing operations. After the project is successfully underway and seeks support for continuation, the principal's special administrative experience and power determine the success of the continuation bid. In fact, Berman and McLaughlin feel so strongly about the principal's role in supporting bids for change, they refer to him/her as "the gatekeeper of change."

School and teacher characteristics found to be influential in project success did not include the usual demographics on ethnic, economic and social strata, nor staff stability.

Instead, they describe teachers with strong "subject orientation," as opposed to "student-centered orientation." Subject-oriented teachers were less easily involved in innovations which they saw as challenging their responsibilities to cover particular content.

Also, two teacher traits proved interesting in their effects: years teaching and sense of efficacy. The greater the teaching experience of the staffs, the less likely the project was to realize its goals or to improve student achievement; these teachers were more inflexible with regard to changing their teaching behaviors or learning new approaches. "Sense of efficacy," as defined in the Rand study, refers to teachers' beliefs in their ability to teach even their most difficult students. This attitude reflects, to some degree, teachers' feelings of their professional competence. This trait was positively related to the successful implementation and continuation of innovative projects; the presence of teachers who expected to succeed in the context of the project helped ensure that success.

District management was an important variable in the continuation of the project, often smoothing over the political road along which projects move from innovative to regular status.

> ...supportive districts designed, from the beginning, continuation strategies that were aimed at maintaining the project in the face of financial, personnel, and political uncertainties.
> (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p.33)

In sum, the factors the Rand team investigated revealed unexpected differences in their impact upon project success. In determining program success, research has traditionally concentrated its evaluative focus on demographic influences (socioeconomic status, ethnicity), project goals, and student outcomes. The Rand report suggests that success is tempered by several variables which share a common, administrative coloring. The special roles of key leaders in the project, on site and in the local administrative agency (district), together with teachers' amenability to change, far outweighed other possible factors affecting the successful start-up and maintenance of a project fostering change. These key factors were 1) active involvement in supporting project efforts, 2) local "ownership" of the project through local input in decisions, development, and training, and 3) "mutual adaptation": the shared burden of change whereby the project adapts to the constraints, resources, and characteristics of the setting, and the institutional setting accommodates the project.

While the Rand study seems less clearly related to our study of program effectiveness in college composition instruction, we believe the nature of the more effective programs is likely to be innovative and subject to the same problems and influences as those projects investigated by the Rand team. In particular, as described in the previous chapter, the CSU campuses are typical of American higher education,

facing new challenges and new knowledge in the area of writing; they are operating under new remedial, placement, and exit competency requirements which have led to program changes. Seed money for remedial projects has only recently been provided by the state, determined by newly developed placement test scores. Further, the available staff in English departments consists primarily of professors trained in literature, many of whom view with great distress the increasing pressure upon them to teach composition courses. Also, composition staffs exhibit an interesting mix of newer and older faculty and a considerable difference in forms of administrative support. These characteristics suggest the value of the Rand study for informing our own investigation into the effects of the setting in which programs operate.

Conclusions and Implications for Our Research

Our literature review, though limited, suggested to us the potential value and likely success of our study and offered several recommendations affecting our research questions and design.

First, the literature on composition disproportionately reports on the instructional research on the individual's writing process and on elementary and secondary writing classrooms. The college composition studies summarized here (Kitzhaber, 1963; Wilcox, 1973; Witte, Meyer, Miller & Faigley, 1981) have had to begin at the beginning, describing current practices, philosophies and theories. Unfortunately,

they have also had to make the hard choice between breadth and depth in the information they gathered and sought to understand. Each study opted for breadth, securing national survey data from program and department administrators only. In our preparations for research, we have found their data useful in listing categories of activities, settings, personnel, and instruction. However, in appealing to the broad sample and employing the limited multiple-choice format, survey researchers have sacrificed the descriptive detail that enlivens category labels and distinguishes among variations in actual practices within those labels. For instance, we find it frustrating to know that discussion of revising and editing occurs "very often" in the first semester writing courses, since we do not know how many of those responses are based upon newer theories of the recursive nature of revision during writing and how many are based upon concern for correctness and error reduction.

Clearly, these studies were not intended to produce that sort of in-depth knowledge, and we do not fault them for not fulfilling goals they never held. Their findings are nevertheless valuable because by "counting" the popularity or frequency of use of various categories, these researchers allow us to make better-informed decisions about worthwhile variables for our own study. We do believe the time has come for a closer look at the current state of college composition. Ten years of exciting new developments in

instructional materials and methods and in theory suggest the importance of a study which can get below the surface structures of operations to see to what degree college writing programs now reflect these developments. This very theme underlies our Phase I activities to gather descriptive data with greater depth than any previous study.

Davis, et al., are clearly focused on elementary and secondary writing instruction and programs to improve that instruction. Nevertheless, their expansive description of outcomes, beyond the usual narrow reliance upon essay test gains, helped us select and refine other categories in the interviews and faculty survey. The Rand study provided the missing link, institutional context: first, highlighting the degree of influence such factors wielded and, second, suggesting the practical range in reality for these factors.

Together those reports also have suggested to us the value of and need for expanding our focus beyond the usual sources of data (administrators in the department) to include English department faculty (both full- and part-timers), faculty teaching writing outside the English department, and key administrators at all levels of campus involvement in writing programs and evaluation.

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CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Framework and Research Setting
Project Activities to Date

Theoretical Framework

Before going on to describe the research setting and our work in the first year, we set forth here the hypotheses that are the intellectual foundations for our work. Since college level writing "programs" have not been well studied previously, and since conflicting theories of the methods and even goals of such instruction abound, we need to advance a series of tentative hypotheses in order to proceed to gather manageable data. At the same time we try to be alert to the limitations of these hypotheses and to gather sufficient data to allow other hypotheses to emerge.

It is the collective judgment of the research team that program decisions have a profound impact upon college writing instruction. Despite the university tradition of independent teaching responsibility--still very much alive even for many minimally trained teaching assistants--it is plain that the teaching of composition differed in important ways from campus to campus and that these differences can be described as programmatic. The fact that faculty involved in a writing program often do not perceive it as a coherent whole, or that program decisions often emerge from university

tradition or merely personal experience, in no way denies the fact that most American colleges and universities have writing programs. Only recently, however, have these programs been recognized as legitimate objects of concern and study. The Council of Writing Program Administrators was formed at the Modern Language Association in the late 1970s in response to this perceived need; the Writing Program Administrators journal WPA was first published just five years ago.

Thus we set out to describe, from our theoretical knowledge and practical experience, a "taxonomy" of writing program features. Creating this descriptive framework helped us define our subject and was the first of a series of tasks focused on the gathering of usable data. This framework led to the collection of "Fact Sheets" from each campus and generated the interview protocols. In each case we sought key information about campus programs that would fill out our preliminary descriptive frame in order to move toward the goal of identifying differences that might turn out to be significant. We needed to move carefully between using "best guesses" about important phenomena to observe and recognizing the possibility that unforeseen hypotheses might well arise from the data if we were not too bound to our preliminary views.

This process of developing premises in order to gather data, which are then used to generate new hypotheses as they are analyzed, is a delicate and creative procedure. We kept

before us the clear practical goal for the project as a whole: we are seeking to offer to program directors and policy makers information which will help them to order or plan writing instruction activities heretofore organized (if organized at all) by tradition or merely personal experience.

We needed to keep in mind the fact that the relation of campus writing program policy to actual classroom instruction is far from clear. Our field interviews have since confirmed the personal experience of the research team that some program directors do not know how much program policy is actually being carried out by individual instructors, particularly where those instructors are tenure-track or tenured faculty.

Although there have been major changes in both theory and practice in composition instruction over the last decade, we expected that much of that change has failed to work its way into composition classrooms. Nevertheless, we felt the nineteen campuses would offer organization and policies to allow us to address issues of program implementation, curricular innovation, and faculty development in this rapidly changing field. Indeed, a continuing question in the field is how to develop programs that will urge, or even mandate, up-to-date knowledge for composition instructors. As we began our research, however, we could not assume consistent connections between program policies and instruction in the field of writing.

The theoretical problems for this project are thus analogous to those faced by the authors of the Rand study of federal programs supporting educational change. Their goal, to "provide an orderly and logical description of how change occurs," called for a similar process of movement between theoretical and practical assumptions: "this process of developing and testing theory is particularly important when there is no clear connection between policies and results, when goals themselves are unclear, when the means or technologies used to promote change are hard to describe and vary over time and place, and when the policies being studied are often only a small factor in the many forces that affect outcomes" (Berman, Greenwood, McLaughlin, & Pincus, 1975, p. 6). This study, like the Rand project, is intended to develop an orderly way of viewing an extraordinarily complex area now using major amounts of public as well as private funds.

As originally designed, our study of college level writing programs will progress through three phases: 1) developing descriptions of program components as they are being implemented for a wide variety of institutions and students; 2) developing an approach to detect such outcome differences as may be traceable to program differences; 3) developing theoretical and practical materials to assist in program change at the point in the institution most responsible and most receptive to this information, i.e., English department

chair and composition director. Thus, our first phase, reported in here, has been basically descriptive. The second, evaluative, phase and the third, theoretical, phase have been planned. Each phase promises to offer to those charged with policy or program responsibility in the area of college writing instruction systematically derived information on which to base decisions.

Research Setting

It is important to note that, while this research takes for its sample the writing instruction programs of The California State University, it is not designed to be a CSU research project. The sheer size of the CSU, with over 300,000 students on its nineteen campuses, and the wide range of its writing instruction programs, offer a (large scale) microcosm of such programs in American higher education as a whole. The following summary of information about the CSU and the structure of the writing programs on CSU campuses is designed to assist readers who may not be familiar with these matters to understand the local context of the research. Neither the programs nor structures described should be seen as unique to the CSU setting; in all cases they are fairly typical of present practice or are readily implemented in other settings in American higher education.

The California State University. This system of institutions consists of nineteen campuses spread out along the thousand-mile length of California. Governed by a Board

of Trustees appointed by the Governor of the state, and administered centrally by the Chancellor's Office located in Long Beach, the campuses still maintain different characters and missions. Distinct from the University of California, the CSU offers bachelor's and master's degrees, teaching credentials, and various professional programs; it is authorized to conduct research consistent with its basic teaching goals.

The Chancellor's Office has played a significant role in the development of the writing instruction programs on campus. Funding for the English Placement Test and the English Equivalency Examination has been administered through the Chancellor's Office, as have the special funds provided for remedial writing instruction. The Division of Academic Program Improvement, formerly called New Program Development and Evaluation, has funded forty-nine innovative campus programs in the teaching of writing to a total amount of $1,111,748 from 1975 through 1981. The Division of Institutional Research has provided space, support and matching funds for the research reported in this volume.

The English Council. This network of representatives from each of the campus English departments meets each fall and spring to discuss professional concerns. These meetings have helped form strong personal and professional links among key departmental faculty, and have given strong impetus to recent developments in the area of writing skills. Both

of the lower-division testing programs, the upper-division writing requirement, and this research project all began with discussions at English Council meetings.

The English Placement Test (EPT). Entering lower-division students are required to take the EPT, unless they have completed freshman composition elsewhere or have entrance test scores above the 80th percentile in verbal aptitude. Over 100,000 students have completed the EPT since it was first offered in 1977, and the campuses are required to offer special assistance to students who score in the lower half of the total scoring range. The 2½-hour test is designed by a CSU test development committee, with the technical assistance of the Educational Testing Service, and consists of four parts: reading, sentence construction, logic and organization, and essay writing. The Legislature has provided enriched instructional funding for students scoring below the 50th percentile on the EPT. Each campus receives a special allotment from the Chancellor's Office to be used in whatever way is deemed appropriate by the campus for these low-scoring students.

The English Equivalency Examination (EEE). This voluntary credit-by-examination program is taken each year by approximately 4,000 students who may gain either two terms of credit for freshman English (about 30% achieve that level) or exemption from the EPT (about 70% of the total test group). Over 31,000 students have taken the EEE since it

was first offered in 1973. The examination is developed by CSU faculty in coordination with the College-Level Examination Program of the College Board, and consists of 90 minutes of multiple-choice testing on the analysis and interpretation of literature, and two 45-minute writing samples calling for experiential-expressive writing as well as analytic writing.

The Upper-Division Writing Requirement. All degree candidates at each of the CSU campuses are now required to demonstrate writing proficiency before receiving the degree. The campuses certify this writing proficiency in different ways, and use different acronyms to describe their programs. Thus the Junior English Proficiency Essay Test at San Francisco is called JEPET, while the Graduation Writing Proficiency Examination at Long Beach is called GWPE; the upper-division course that meets the requirement at San Bernardino is called 495. (Unfamiliar acronyms in campus interviews will often refer to the local name of this requirement, which is having substantial impact upon the writing programs on all campuses.)

A typical entering student will take either the EPT or the EEE. If the EPT score is low, he or she will pass through one or more support programs at the remedial level; with a high EPT score or EPT exemption, the student will enter directly into freshman composition. After freshman composition, or exemption (with credit) from freshman composition for a high EEE score, the student will meet the upper-division requirement as a junior or senior. Transfer students

from community colleges do not generally take lower-division writing courses, but do need to meet the upper-division requirement in writing skills. The campuses have a wide variety of programs at all levels, including support services available to any student who finds his or her way to the learning center. However, different campuses have different programs, and there has been little or no attempt to regularize or restrict these offerings at the central level. This wide variety of program features, within a common ground of requirements and tests, offers the context for the present research.

Summary of Project Activities to Date

The emphasis of Phase I of this research has been to obtain the most complete and most accurate description of college composition programs that we could achieve. Since time and resources were restricted, we proceeded under the assumption that The California State University serves, in its variety of campuses, as a rough working model of American higher education. In addition, we decided that less expensive data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, would be used on all nineteen campuses of the CSU, while more expensive data collection (interviews) would focus on ten representative campuses. (See Chapter Five for the sampling procedure.) From the start, we were aware that, if we were to develop this description sensitively, a collaborative faculty research model would be required.

A faculty research team was convened in the early days of the project to add depth, practical experience, and specialized knowledge to the research. Four composition faculty, from four different campuses, were appointed; as well known scholars in the field, they also brought additional credibility and reputation to the project, qualities that were vital to the success of the campus interviews and that will be valuable in disseminating results. The research team met regularly with project staff and discussed all phases of the work as it progressed, developing and approving all instruments, and undertaking much of the work involving personal contact with the campuses.

The project also convened a three-member advisory panel from outside the CSU to serve an external critical function. The three outside panelists are specialists in educational research, psychology, and tests and measurement. All three have an active interest in the field of writing instruction. The outside advisory panel was convened in spring 1981 to review progress and plans, to propose suggestions, and to evaluate programs. This panel was particularly helpful in suggesting ways of moving from the descriptive materials of Phase I to the outcome measure data collection of Phase II.

An initial need for clear definition of the terms and concepts behind the research led to some important theoretical work. The chapter describing the Taxonomy of Writing Program Features speaks to the problem of defining "writing program"

for the purpose of the study, and elsewhere in this report (e.g., earlier in this chapter) other conceptual work of the panel is set forth. In general, it was necessary to discuss and define the boundaries of project efforts and categories of information to be gathered. This report represents the decisions reached on a number of theoretical issues, definitions, and practical limitations that allowed the work to proceed in an orderly and coherent fashion.

The first document produced by the project was the Taxonomy of Writing Program Features, which is presented and discussed in Chapter Seven. An overlapping agenda item at that time was the selection of a subsample of ten campuses to be visited for a close-up look at their writing programs. Criteria for exclusion of campuses (from the nineteen-campus population) were adopted and used to select ten campuses. The four faculty panelists and the principal investigator (also a faculty member) were each assigned responsibility for two of these campuses, excluding their own, and two other campuses which would not be visited but which would be included in other data gathering activities.

The staff and panelists next set about the task of designing and pilot-testing three instruments to collect descriptive program information. The first was a brief survey document sent to English department chairs on all nineteen campuses. This document asks for course descriptions, staffing patterns, program and department administrative

structures, perceived strengths and weaknesses of the composition program, and other general information. (This survey, the Fact Sheet, is included in the appendices.)

The second instrument is actually a set of six distinct interview scripts for the following personnel categories: English department chair, composition program coordinator, remedial program coordinator, Dean of Humanities, Academic Vice President, learning skills center director, Educational Opportunity Program director. (These last two categories use the same script.) The interview scripts were revised several times, field tested, and practiced. The five faculty members then conducted and tape recorded the interviews on two campuses each. After the 57 interviews were transcribed, each of them was coded by two separate panelists (neither of whom was the interviewer) in accordance with a coding scheme, and then analyzed by topic. Information derived from the interviews is presented in Chapter Eight, and the interview scripts are included in the appendices volume.

Finally, project staff and panelists decided to gather faculty questionnaire data in order to gain a broader sample of program participants and a wider variety of perspectives upon the phenomena being described. The questionnaire was developed, pre-tested on a university faculty outside the CSU, further revised, and finally distributed in two separate forms. All people teaching composition on all nineteen campuses received a questionnaire. The return rate of 55%

is well above normal expectations for such a lengthy survey, and the detailed responses to the survey, tabled in the Appendix volume, will yield rich information about faculty perceptions and practices. Preliminary analysis of the questionnaire is presented in Chapter Nine.

While this study was planned to provide descriptive information about a wide range of issues in the area of composition instruction, the following areas were not major concerns, nor do we intend to develop evidence or conclusions about these areas:

- o Individual teacher evaluation
- o Classroom observation techniques
- o Comparative evaluation of CSU campus programs
- o Theories of composition curricula or of the writing process
- o Measurement issues in writing

Other studies have attended to these matters, which are all relevant and important to composition instruction. However, as the literature review demonstrates, little is known about the effectiveness of composition program options, the central concern of this project.

We expect the data here to form a valuable base for research in effective writing program features. This study should provide answers for the first time to some of the most important questions of concern to practitioners, administrators, and researchers in writing instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Questions for Phase I

In the first phase, our descriptive inquiry into the state of current practice (as represented by the CSU), we have asked:

1. What are the goals of composition instruction at the college level?
2. What is a composition program?
3. What are the institutional structures within which composition programs operate?
4. Who are the students these programs serve?

Goals. When we speak of the goals of instruction in composition, we are not limiting those goals only to student gains in basic writing. One of the assumptions of current composition theory is that writing helps the student to see that writing is a way of coming to know (a means of learning) as well as a way of communicating that which is already known. Further, we assume the importance and relevance of students' attitudes toward writing tasks such as revision, and students' ability to cope with writing problems such as anxiety or block. While these instructional goals seem reasonable, they may be articulated differently by different programs. Or, there may be other goals held by composition program directors. Our first phase of research is intended to uncover the range and definition of instructional goals,

and we have been determined not to be too narrow in our scope of inquiry.

Beyond these usually explicit goals of composition instruction for students, we are also interested in the less obvious goals of the composition program for its faculty and for the campus setting in which it operates. Writing instruction is especially likely to move toward these other implicit "goals" because of recent attention to instructional theory, coupled with the dramatic increase in demand for composition instruction and remedial writing instruction. These circumstances create a unique situation in which instructors trained and interested in English literature are being asked to teach courses in basic writing and freshman composition. Such a situation raises the issues of faculty development and, less formally, communication necessary among staff to share knowledge and experience. In addition to these in-house, or departmental, goals for the writing program, there exists the growing awareness and concern among instructors in other departments and among campus administrators that students' writing competence be a shared responsibility. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the California State University system's policy requiring campus certification of upper-division writing competence for all students. Our research project looks at the composition programs for implicit goals related to this campuswide responsibility for writing.

Composition Program. One of the early decisions in formulating the study design was to determine the working definition of the phenomenon being studied. Just what should we include and exclude in our research on effective writing programs? Clearly we want our work to be useful to a variety of postsecondary institutions, and yet we wish to keep our scope of work to a size that will allow for sufficient depth in inquiry. Our first consideration, then, was to focus upon lower-division required writing instruction courses, commonly "freshman composition," and upon the adjunct support programs of instruction such as tutorials, workshops, learning centers, and the like. Within that frame of reference we find it useful to refer to four features of programs: 1) organization, 2) curriculum, 3) instruction, and 4) articulation.

Our interest in the organization of composition programs refers here to the type and sequence of courses, for example, tutoring workshops, and other ways of providing instruction. (Our interest in administrative decision-making in program organization is examined in our research question on institutional contexts.) Our interest in curriculum translates into asking who is teaching what where. For example, we find remedial assistance in writing defined in various ways and offered in learning centers, ethnic studies departments, education departments and, of course, English departments.

Our interest in instruction needs careful elaboration here. This is not a study of individual teachers and their classroom techniques. For reasons described in the theoretical framework section, we are focusing our inquiry on writing programs. Instruction becomes important as a feature of program organization or policy. We have learned in Phase I that the range of delivery systems is great, even within a single format such as "workshop" or "tutoring assistance"; we are interested in the ways writing programs affect these differences.

Our fourth concern in describing composition programs is the nature of articulation among courses and among other sources of instructional assistance. In some instances we find very little systematic cooperation, even competition, among places serving the same students; in others we find a history of cooperation and support.

Institutional Structures. Programs do not operate in a vacuum. There are several levels of administrative contexts within which a college program is conducted. In composition programs these levels are typically the English department, the School of Humanities or Arts and Sciences, and the college campus at large. In some settings, such as the one in which our study exists, there is also a multicampus system governed by a central, systemwide administration.

Three issues arise within our question on the institutional context for writing programs. These are 1) composition

program organization, 2) campus administrative and organizational structures related to composition instruction on campus, and 3) external pressures or policies, as from the central administration or the tax-paying public.

Within the composition program itself, we look at the nature of decision-making with regard to curriculum, instructional methods, teacher assignment and evaluation. We pay particular attention to the increasingly popular phenomenon of "part-time" teachers and non-tenured "lecturers" hired specifically to teach composition or remedial writing. Our interest is in the relationship of these staff members to regular department staff and to the decision-making process that affects, ultimately, the range of options available to writing instructors. This issue is particularly complex and important, since sometimes these temporary staff members are better informed and more experienced in composition instruction than are their literature-focused counterparts.

We look also at two levels of policies and structures affecting composition programs: the systemwide level and the individual campus level (where we have studied ten of the nineteen sites with particular intensity). At the campus level we look at campuswide literacy committees and policies affecting composition instruction, special funding for remedial assistance, incentives for involvement by non-English faculty in writing instruction, and cooperation among learning centers, tutoring assistance programs, and

English departments. Beyond the campus, our research question on institutional contexts leads us to inquire about policies affecting campus composition instruction. Here our special setting of The California State University offers the opportunity to trace the impact of two particular systemwide policies addressing writing skills (a placement test in composition for entering freshmen, and required campus certification of upper-division writing competence for graduation) to determine how composition programs on the nineteen campuses have responded for their own student populations and resources. While the placement policy dictates the use of a specially developed systemwide test (the EPT), implementation of the graduation writing competency requirement has been left up to the discretion of the individual campuses. Our research in Phase I describes not only the particular method each campus has developed, but also the apparent impact of the policy and campus procedure upon the composition program for lower-division writing instruction.

Composition Program Students. The composition program in its institutional setting exists to serve the student, and no description of program can be meaningful without a consideration of those students. The characteristics of the student population the program serves often affect the decisions and policies governing that program. Many of the campuses in our study face an increasing proportion of entering freshmen who are "exceptional" admissions, or

nontraditional in their preparation for college work. Increasingly, students for whom English is a second language are enrolling in classes for freshman composition.

Therefore our interest in the composition program student population is not solely for the purposes of data analysis of differential effectiveness of program features for minority and white majority factors, but also for understanding the changing demands upon composition programs as the college population changes in its needs and background experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

Sampling Plan

The Population

The nineteen campuses of The California State University are diverse with regard to geographic location, size of the student population, and ethnic makeup of the students served. Tables 1 and 2 present a description of these campuses on these three dimensions. Also of interest in our study, campuses differ in their use of part-time and full-time, non-tenured instructors to teach undergraduate composition courses. Table 3 presents this information for each campus.

Values for the first category, GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, include: rural, urban and suburban; north, south and central. There are three values of the second category, UNDERGRADUATE POPULATION SIZE. Large campuses are those whose fall enrollment exceeds 20,000 students; medium campuses are greater than 10,000 and less than 20,000; small campuses are those with less than 10,000 undergraduates. Categories representing PROPORTION OF MINORITY STUDENTS are defined relative to the proportion of minority student populations on each of the nineteen campuses. Enrollment figures for Black, Hispanic and Asian students vary between 7% and 40% of total undergraduate populations for the nineteen campuses. Accordingly, our three categories representing campus ethnic makeup

are defined by percent of white students:[1,2] low white (less than or equal to 62% white undergraduates); relatively well-mixed (62% to 80% white enrollment); high white (white students comprise 81% or more of the enrollment total).

STAFFING STATUS within English departments is a complex variable, i.e., comprised of several factors. These factors describe the distribution of official status and responsibility. Full-time staff may be tenured or tenure-track, or contract lecturers. Part-time staff are lecturers contracted as needed, course by course. Generally, graduate teaching assistants are not counted in these categories. Full-time lecturers and part-timers are most often assigned to teach composition courses while full-time, tenured and tenure-track professors most often instruct in literature, rhetoric and other non-composition, upper-division courses. We view the distribution of English department staff among these status categories as an indirect indicator of who is in fact teaching composition. This staffing status variable was included in our description of campuses on two dimensions: proportion of staff that is (a) tenured or tenure-track; or (b) contracted full or part time. These proportions can be expressed either as the percentage of full-time equivalent positions (taking into account the partial courseloads of part-time contract instructors) or as the percentage of the total number of

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[1]Based on figures reported for fall 1980.

[2]In this way other, smaller minority groups are included in the "minority" definition.

individuals teaching courses in the English department. Both approaches are presented in Table 3A and B. In Table 3A the campuses are separated into groups according to the percentage of FTEF which is accounted for by tenured faculty and the percentage which is accounted for by part-time faculty. We have found that a 75% split-point is most meaningful along the tenured dimension. The part-time dimension is divided into three categories: less than 10% of FTEF, 10 to 19%, and 20% or more of FTEF.

Table 3B displays faculty distributions in a slightly different manner, by grouping campuses according to the proportion of faculty members who are part- or full-time contract instructors. Three categories are found to distribute the campuses well: those which had less than 20% of faculty on contract, those which had 20 to 39% on contract, and those campuses at which 40% or more of the instructors in its English department were non-tenure track personnel.

These data and the variables they represent have been used along with other data (described later) to select campuses for the interviewing activity.

Sampling for Phase I Interviews

Given the limited resources for this project, our first step in the development of the interview scripts required that we determine which campuses to include.

To select the ten campuses (more than half of the nineteen total population) we sought campuses reputed to be

most innovative or successful in their composition program. In addition to concern with program reputations, we were determined to maintain a range in campus factors such as size, geographic location, ethnic distribution, and the like. We reached agreement upon the following campuses for the interview sample: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, Q. This includes the two polytechnic campuses.

The on-site interview sample of campus personnel was more difficult to determine, in part because of the variety in organizational structures on campuses of varying size. Our faculty panel was instrumental in this selection (and in the campus sample selection above). The faculty panel consensus on the composition-related leadership for interviewing purposes included: the English department chair, the composition director/coordinator and, where appropriate, the remedial coordinator. In deciding which campus administrators to include, the panel and project staff agreed that the academic vice presidents were an important source of information about "campus climate" toward writing and about implementation of the upper-division writing requirement for graduation.[3] Also, since many campus support service organizations outside the English Department offer writing assistance or instruction, the research team decided to include learning center directors (and/or tutoring center directors), directors of programs

[3]For a discussion of the California State University system's Upper Division Writing Requirement for Graduation, please see Chapter Three.

for the disadvantaged, and directors of ethnic studies centers (for example, the director of the Educational Opportunity Program and the head of the Chicano Studies Department).

At the last minute, thanks to the faculty panelists, we realized we had omitted a key intermediary, the deans of either Humanities or Arts and Letters (depending upon the campus organization). We expected that the expansion of interest in writing instruction outside of the composition program and the English Department might be orchestrated by or through these administrators.

Table 1

Geographic Setting of Campuses

Location in the State	Community Setting		
	Rural	Urban	Suburban
North	B, M, R	D, E	H, N
Central	A, C, S	-	P
South	G	F, K, L	I, J, O, Q

Table 2

Student Population: Size and Ethnicity*

Ethnic Diversity	Undergraduate Enrollment		
	Less than 10,000 (small)	10,000 to 20,000 (medium)	More than 20,000 (large)
Less than 62% White (high minority)	G, Q	-	E, L
62% to 80% White (relatively mixed)	S	I, N, P	D, H, J, K
More than 80% White (low minority)	A, B, M	C, R	F, O

*Based on 1980 fall enrollments, compiled by the Division of Institutional Research, CSU Chancellor's Office.

Table 3

Use of Part-Time and Tenured Staff

A. Part-Time vs. Tenured Percent of FTEF*

Percent Part-Timers	Percent Tenured	
	Less Than 75%	75% or More
Less than 10%	S	N, O, D, B, A
10% to 19%	C, R, G	I, P, K, Q, H
20% or More	M, E	L, J

*FTEF data unavailable for one campus.

Table 3

Use of Part-Time and Tenured Staff

B. Non-Tenure Track Faculty as Percent of Headcount

Less than 20%	N, S, O, B, A
20% to 39%	I, C, P, K, Q, H, G, J, D
40% or More	R, M, L, F, E

Chapter Six, below, describes the interview procedures and the method of developing the interview data. Chapter Eight gives a preliminary analysis of the data, which yielded a particularly rich picture of how the world works on each campus in the sample.

Sampling for Faculty Survey

The faculty survey was planned to acquire a second perspective on composition programs, that of the faculty staffing those programs. While our interviews asked for the perceptions of campus, department, program, and adjunct services administrators, our questionnaire would ask similar and additional questions of the people teaching writing on campus.

Accordingly, we decided to attempt to sample all CSU faculty teaching writing, i.e., our entire population. This task, normally an acknowledged impossibility, was facilitated

by the cooperation of the systemwide English Council[4] and the efforts of our research team of faculty members.

We obtained, from each campus, a complete roster of all people on campus who were currently or regularly teaching undergraduate writing courses. These lists included staff from departments other than English, e.g., Chicano Studies and tutoring centers, as well as English department staff. Next, we assigned each name a code number designating campus, department affiliation, and personal identification number (within campus roster). These numbers were printed on the prepaid, preaddressed return envelopes which accompanied the questionnaire. In this way, we were able to monitor return rates and to send follow-ups to each individual faculty member whose survey we had not received.

As a result of our efforts, we sent out 862 questionnaires; 799 of Form A for English department instructors, and 63 of Form B for non-English department instructors.[5] We received 443 completed Form A, and 40 completed Form B. This represents a Form A return rate of 55%, and an overall rate of 56%. Table 4 summarizes these results; Table 5 presents a breakdown by campus. It is important to note that the campuses differ widely in the number of writing instructors on their roster. Thus, for example, while campus M has returned only 9 questionnaires, only 15 were sent out.

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[4]For a more complete description of the English Council, please see Chapter Three.

[5]Only Form A responses are discussed in this report.

Table 4

Response Sample of Questionnaire

Form A		
Sent	799*	55.4%
Received	443	
Form B		
Sent	63	63.5%
Received	40	
Combined		
Sent	862	56.0%
Received	483	

*Includes some duplicate listings approximately 6, from questionnaires returned with code numbers obliterated, for which new code numbers were assigned.

Table 5

Campus Response Rate for Questionnaire
(Form A - Department Writing Staff)

Campus	Number Sent	Number Received
A	22	18
B	26	15
C	38	18
D	43	25
E	45	25
F	100	38
G	19	13
H	69	46
I	39	21
J	49	29
K	87	50
L	53	30
M	15	10
N	26	14
O	44	28
P	53	23
Q	22	19
R	27	11
S	22	10
Totals	799	443

CHAPTER SIX

Methodology

Instrumentation

The aim of Phase I research activities was to acquire descriptive information on composition programs in the CSU. These data then have been used to answer the four research questions. Table 6 summarizes the relationship between research questions below and data collection activities.

1. What are the goals of composition instruction at the college level?
2. What is a composition program?
3. What are the institutional structures within which composition programs operate?
4. Who are the students these programs serve?

To address the research questions posed above, the research team decided to gather basic data on composition programs from two sources: leadership personnel on campus who have a stake in or an influence on the composition program, and faculty in the English department, learning center, and other places where writing instruction occurs. Two important decisions shaped these activities. First, we decided that we did not know enough yet about the varieties in program practices or organization to construct or rely upon a "closed choice" questionnaire. Second, we felt that we could obtain a broader view of writing programs by

Table 6

Summary of Phase I Design

	RESEARCH QUESTION	DATA SOURCE	MEASURE OR METHOD
1.	What are the goals of composition instruction for our college program sample?	Campus administrators English department chair Composition program director	Interview
2.	What is a composition "program" (staffing, central & adjunct courses)?	Campus Administrators English department chair Composition program director Program instructional staff	Interview Interview & Fact Sheet Interview & Fact Sheet Faculty Questionnaire
3.	What are the institutional supporting structures for composition instruction?	Campus administrators Composition program chair Adjunct services administrators	Interview Interview & Fact Sheet Interview
4.	Who are the students served by the composition program?	Composition program director Remedial program director Adjunct services administrators Program instructional staff CSU Systemwide data bank	Interview & Fact Sheet Interview & Fact Sheet Interview Faculty Questionnaire Enrollment figures

interviewing key leadership people rather than by interviewing a sample of English writing instructors. This, then, would be followed by the all-faculty survey which would allow us to include staff perceptions of program operations and campus context. Thus, to gather necessary data, we constructed three instruments: (1) the campus Fact Sheet, (2) six interview protocols, and (3) the faculty questionnaire.

To prepare our data collection instruments, our research team first developed a taxonomy of composition program features. (The "Taxonomy of Writing Program Features" is explicated in Chapter Seven.) This "taxonomy" covers the four major areas of focus in any investigation of writing programs: the administrative context of the program, the program structure itself, the staff involved in the program and, of course, the student population the program serves. Within each of these areas our research group broke out categories and subcategories for descriptive information. It became evident that these information points were of two sorts: personal opinion and fact. We did not want to leave personal perceptions about composition programs solely for the commentary of our interview sample of administrators. Thus, the research team assigned such categories to the survey of writing faculty as well as to the administrator interview protocols. In this way we hope to acquire two views of the same reality.

Fact Sheet. In addition, we found that we needed some background information on campus and department programs in order for our researchers to function as knowledgeable interviewers. Accordingly, we devised the "Fact Sheet" on campus composition programs and sent copies of each to the nineteen English department chairs. The Fact Sheet requests information on structural aspects of composition programs: the number of sections offered in freshman composition; the

kinds and sequence of writing courses; the location of remedial assistance; the use of non-tenure track staff and graduate assistants; and existence of policies regarding common texts, content, instructional methods and student assessment. All nineteen Fact Sheets were returned, and interviewers took copies with them when they went into the field. (A copy of the Fact Sheet can be found in the Appendix volume.)

Interview Protocols. In the interview protocols we attempted to embody the taxonomy categories of program features. At the broadest level, these categories or domains of variables are: (1) systemwide administrative structures and policies; (2) campus level structures and policies; (3) program level structures, policies, and staff; and (4) student population characteristics. For the most part, we concentrated our questions within the first three domains on organizational structures, inter-level communication and involvement, and decision-making processes for composition-related issues. Additionally, within the third category of program level variables, we included questions to elicit the attitudes and behaviors of leadership toward the composition staff; the differences between tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure track staff in their skills, beliefs, and behaviors; and the perceived successes and failures of the composition program. Also, since the Fact Sheets became available during the development of the

interview protocol, they allowed the research team to identify particularly interesting variations in regular program operations, variations that helped fine-tune some of the interview questions and which suggested some of the follow-up probes to those questions.

As we constructed our interview scripts, the experienced faculty on the research team realized that some categories of information were outside the range of experiences and knowledge of certain administrators, while other question categories could be asked of all interviewees. Accordingly, we constructed six protocol forms, basically a single theme and five variations. These protocols are included in the Appendix volume accompanying this report.

The first and most complete protocol is that for the composition program coordinator (sometimes called composition program "director," "head," or "chair"). In this script we probe extensively for information on program policies and decision-making processes regarding instructional goals, methods, materials, and staff. In addition, we ask about relationships between the writing program and the campus, and the program and adjunct services (such as the Educational Opportunity Program office).

The second interview script is for the coordinator of remedial writing programs or courses offered within the English department. According to our Fact Sheet data, this position is not present on all campuses, and on those where

it does appear, it is often an unofficial title. Nevertheless, some English departments find they have sufficient remedial workload to support this position. The protocol constructed for remedial coordinators is much like that for the composition coordinators. It emphasizes the instructional components of remedial coursework; it asks about the relationship between remedial work and regular composition, between remedial work and the support services in writing which are available outside regular English department courses.

Also quite similar to the composition coordinator script is the one constructed for the coordinators of writing instruction offered outside the English department courses. Interestingly, our Fact Sheet data indicated that some such services, especially tutoring and writing labs, are available within the English department as well as outside, e.g., through campus learning assistance centers. In these interview scripts we are interested in the relationship of these activities to regular English composition and remedial composition courses and to composition program operations. We also seek instructional information using questions parallel to those used in uncovering instructional goals, materials, methods, and staffing, in the composition program.

The fourth interview protocol is that for the English department chair. It is much like the composition coordinator script; however, emphasis is upon program-department relations

rather than upon composition program policies and procedures. Also of interest is the background of the department chair with regard to writing instruction, and his/her perceptions of the kind and amount of support the department provides for the composition program.

The fifth and sixth interview protocols are for campus administrators who are in a position to exert an influence on the composition program. Our faculty research team and the data from our Fact Sheets suggested that the academic vice presidents and the deans of the schools within which the English departments are housed are often involved in writing program policy and were good sources of information about the campus climate surrounding writing instruction. Most of the questions on these two protocols ask about the interest in and commitment to college level composition instruction on the part of campus administration. Also of interest is the perceived impact on campus from the systemwide upper division writing requirement for graduation, a requirement that must be met to demonstrate writing competence before the award of the undergraduate degree. (The question of impact on the writing program and on demand for outside writing instructional support services is also included on protocols for English department chair, composition coordinator, and adjunct services directors.)

After the interview scripts were developed, they were pre-tested with the faculty research team role-playing as

both interviewers and interviewees. After a next round of adjustments, the protocol was tried out on staff from a campus excluded from the interview sample. The four faculty on the research team and the project director, also an English professor, each prepared to visit two campuses and spend two days interviewing on each campus. Interviewers took with them tape recorders, notebooks, copies of the Fact Sheets for their campuses, and guidelines for interviewing and for the write-up of field notes. The interviews took place during November and early December 1981, and resulting tapes were transcribed during December and January 1982. In all, 57 interviews were conducted on our ten-campus sample.

To digest the interview data and transform them into more manageable units, we followed a recursive process in which we both applied categories to the information and allowed categories to emerge from the data. As described in Patton (1980)[1] and elsewhere, this process begins with broad-level content analysis in which passages of conversation are labeled at a broad level of topic (sometimes covering two or three different topics in any one section). This process was carried out by the faculty research team, though no one coded interviews he/she had conducted. These analyses and results of analyses are described in Chapter Eight. Then, within each topic, the passages are reviewed

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[1]Patton, M.J. Qualitative Evaluation Methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980.

for the inherent categories distinguishing the range of responses on the topic.[2]

Faculty Questionnaire. The faculty questionnaire was developed primarily by the associate director of the project, a specialist in educational research; the faculty research team then reviewed and revised the questionnaire during a series of meetings. Development was based upon the identification of domains of information needed for the research. Decisions on specific content were guided by our review of interview experiences and Fact Sheet data, and by relationships among program features as hypothesized in the taxonomy. We decided to cover four domains of information: (1) skills and knowledge about the teaching of composition; (2) attitudes toward composition as a subject and toward the composition program on campus; (3) behaviors (self-reported, of course) that demonstrate an instructional approach and those that demonstrate active professional interest in composition instruction on campus; and (4) perceptions of the group process in decision-making for the program and sharing of ideas, perceptions of efficacy, and perceptions of outside support for the composition program. Additionally, we deliberately include items similar to those questions which had appeared on the various interview protocols.

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[2]As Patton shows, the analysis and synthesis of qualitative data is a complex and time-consuming task. We expect to continue to refine and interpret these data in later phases of the project.

In this way we hoped to verify our interview descriptive data and to expand upon it somewhat by tapping a source largely unfamiliar to the administrators, i.e., classroom activities as seen by the actual instructors. In particular, our interview data had already demonstrated to us a remarkably consistent lack of awareness on the part of administrators with regard to what goes on in the classrooms (and in the minds) of the full-time, tenure-track faculty who teach composition. This is largely due to the almost absolute autonomy these faculty members have in comparison to the more carefully supervised and evaluated part-time, nontenure-track or graduate student instructors. In fact, this faculty questionnaire will be the first substantial source of descriptive data for tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching composition. The faculty questionnaire was distributed to all instructional and administrative faculty teaching writing in the English departments of the nineteen campuses in mid-April, 1982.

In addition, based upon information in the Fact Sheets and interviews, we developed a second form of the questionnaire for instructional and administrative staff offering writing instruction or instructional support services outside the English department, such as learning center staff or Chicano Studies Department composition course instruction. This latter group, receiving Form B of the questionnaire, is not included in this report, although a copy of the Form B survey is appended along with Form A.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Taxonomy of Writing Program Variables

Development of the Taxonomy

Because no commonly accepted definition of the concept "writing program" is to be found in the literature on composition, our research team was obliged to formulate a working definition to focus our study. We might have justified a definition that includes the entire liberal arts degree since, increasingly, faculty in all disciplines employ writing in their courses not only as a recorder of things learned but also as a mode of learning. However, a definition that would have required us to include the entire university curriculum and faculty was rejected as impractical. On the other hand, restricting the definition to single writing classes, as designed by relatively autonomous instructors, would have eliminated the possibility of arriving at the kind of useful generalizations that our study aims to produce.

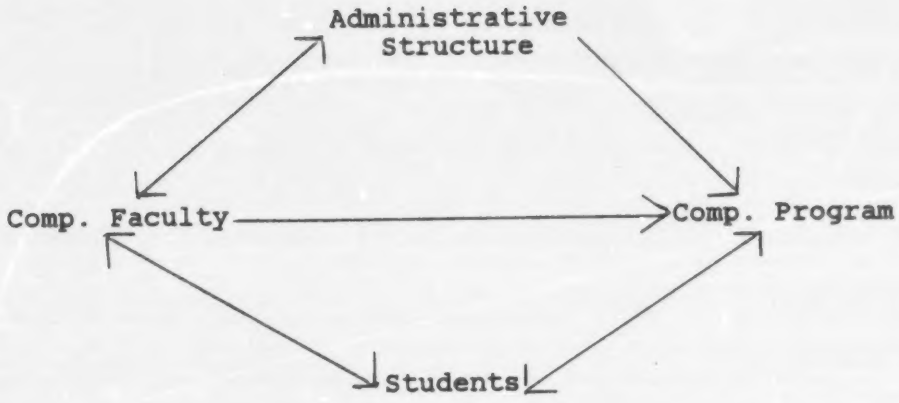
We quickly decided, therefore, to consider as programmatic only those components that are assumed to affect groups of faculty and students beyond the individual writing class. For example, a staff decision to adopt a particular text or to establish particular goals for all courses in the program fits our definition of a program variable, whereas an individual instructor's decisions about texts and goals unique to his

course does not. (However, an administrative decision to allow instructors to make their own choices is considered programmatic.) Correspondingly, a campus decision to set up a writing laboratory or tutorial center is programmatic, whereas a particuar instructor's decision to employ individualized procedures is not. (Again, an administrative decision to allow instructors such options would be programmatic.)

A definition that does not encompass any and all campus writing instruction must at the same time recognize that many elements of the campus as a whole have an impact upon the writing program. On some campuses, for instance, graduation writing proficiency requirements are an important feature of the larger context in which writing instruction takes place. On many campuses, the skill level of entering students will be a factor in program decisions. And on all campuses, administrative actions on one or more levels inescapably affect the writing program. Thus, the composition program itself, with its course structure and adjuncts, its content and methods, formed only one of four parts that we identified as interconnected factors that bear upon writing instruction. After much discussion, the research team postulated the interplay represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Scheme for Major Categories of Program Taxonomy



As Figure 1 shows, the ultimate form and operation of a composition program is the result of a complex set of relations among faculty, administrators, and students. The program cannot be described as an abstraction apart from the individuals who give it life. Nonetheless, it has an identifiable structure of its own that derives from circumstances as well as cumulative decisions that are variously implemented by key individuals. Features of the program itself are influenced by and, in turn, influence other components of the taxonomy which, for research purposes, functions as a theoretical diagram. This framework makes it possible to describe and, eventually, to compare elements of the composition program, as earlier defined, within a complex campus environment.

Table 7

Summary of Major Factors in Program
Taxonomy Categories

Administrative Structure and Decision Making

- o administrative organization
- o faculty organization
- o department structure and decision making
- o program decision making and administration

Composition Program

- o structures
- o instructional formats
- o instructional activities

Composition Program Faculty

- o demographics
- o experience/education
- o motivation(s)
- o philosophy of composition
- o practices

Students

- o demographics (SDQ, ethnicity, sex, age, etc.)
- o attitude, anxiety
- o academics (record)
- o post measures

Administrative Structure and Decision-Making

The team distinguished administrative issues from operational issues in order to determine how policies affecting the composition program are made. On all of the university campuses in our study (and on the vast majority of American college and university campuses) there are several levels of administrative organization. Closest to program operations is the administrative structure of the program itself, usually a small structure operating within the English department, and, in a few cases, within other units that have responsiblity for writing instruction. The larger structure within which the composition program resides usually consists of departmental committees and a department chair. We expect that the quality of articulation between composition program and English department administrations varies among campuses and may have an impact upon the operations or policies in writing instruction. Often, particularly on large campuses, this secondary layer of administrative structure may expand to include a school of humanities or arts and letters with its own dean and school committees.

Campus-level administration comprises the third and broadest level of organization and decision-making structures affecting composition. This may include campuswide committees, vice presidents, and deans, all of whom approve and allocate resources for implementing composition policies. Also, at

this level, attitudes and decisions may affect the extent of campuswide involvement in and responsibility for composition.

A final layer of administrative decision-making is unique to multi-campus systems: the systemwide central office. It is at this level that the most important policy-setting decisions may occur and financial or legal support for those decisions arise. (This level has significantly affected composition instruction for the nineteen campuses of The California State University, as Chapter 2 of this report makes clear.) Important policy, funding, and testing decisions made at the system level have had a strong impact upon all writing programs in the system. In particular, the Board of Trustees' action in May 1976 established three new policies that caused, and still cause, review and revision of campus writing programs: (1) a systemwide English Placement Test; (2) authorization of workload credit for faculty teaching remedial English; and (3) establishment of a writing proficiency requirement at the upper-division level as a condition for graduation.

Of all these structures, the administration of the composition program clearly has the most immediate impact upon writing instruction. Some composition chairs are highly trained in composition, and exert considerable influence upon the program; others serve largely because it is their turn in a position someone must occupy. Some composition committees meet often and make important decisions on staffing,

Table 8

Administrative Structure and Decision Making

1. Systemwide administrative organization
   (a) systemwide funding
   (b) systemwide data gathering
   (c) procedures and policies
      - English Council
      - Academic Senate
      - EPT, EEE

2. Campuswide faculty entities and administrative policies
   (a) campuswide committees and coordinators
      - upper division writing requirement committee
   (b) campuswide policies and procedures (requirements)
      - What are they? (remedial, lower and upper division)
      - How are they decided?
      - What is their impact on faculty?
   (c) non-English department composition activities

3. English department structure and decision making
   (a) department chair
   (b) committee structure and coordination
   (c) composition direction and coordination
   (d) faculty assignment:
      - student/teacher ratio
      - teaching load
      - proportion of staff teaching composition
      - proportion of composition instructors/classes taught by t.a.'s, part-timers, lecturers
   (f) decision making
      - location of decisions by type (placement policy, texts, etc.
   (g) morale
      - expectations for colleagues and program

4. Composition program decision making and administration
   (a) English department chair involvement with composition
   (b) composition direction and coordination
      - professionalism
      - nature of responsibilities (texts, curricula)
      - power/effectiveness
   (c) composition committee
      - meetings (frequency)
      - turf (power and jurisdiction
      - nature of membership
   (d) policy and procedure agreements for composition classes, "follow-up" and enforcement of policy
   (e) faculty development and "retraining"
   (f) morale
      - expectations for colleagues and program

course goals, curriculum, texts, and examinations; other composition committees meet rarely and do little. The research team is particularly interested in knowing whether leadership in the program bears upon such matters as staff morale, faculty retraining and, indeed, the quality of writing instruction itself.

While this portion of the taxonomy does not attempt to list all possible administrative structures which may affect writing programs, it does encompass the functions that are likely to affect program quality.

Composition Program

Next, we focus attention on certain specific program components which represent options for the instructional process itself. These features often fall within the purview of a composition committee or composition chair; they may affect all or some portion of the five possible levels of composition instruction: pre-remedial (study skills), remedial, freshman, advanced, graduate. The research team considered three categories of features as probably significant: program structure itself, instructional formats, and instructional activities.

Program structure, where it can be said to exist, centers on features common to classes at a particular level (e.g., all remedial classes). Thus, some programs attempt to normalize grading procedures in various ways, ranging from exhortation to common examinations graded by the staff

as a whole. While some programs rest content with implicit goals for instruction, others develop more or less elaborate statements of goals and procedures for all those teaching particular courses. Indeed, some programs by design avoid common standards, goals, and procedures, while other programs seek to develop them. Whether one pattern, or combination of patterns, tends to enhance student outcomes remains to be determined.

While evaluation of composition instruction would appear to be an important common feature of composition programs, it varies considerably from one program to another. Graduate students and most part-time instructors are routinely evaluated with considerable care, but full-time instructors may or may not be evaluated, and tenured faculty rarely if ever are evaluated. It may be that the advantages of systematic evaluation are offset by the risk of lowering staff morale. The variety of evaluation practices in composition programs no doubt reflects this problem, as well as others.

A second category of features that the research team sees as potentially significant has to do with instructional format. The range here is from class lectures through small group activities to individualized instruction. In addition, support services for writing instruction vary widely in format. Learning skills centers, for instance, within or outside English departments, may offer tutoring, programmed materials, workshops, or even automated devices. The

Table 9

Composition Program

Curricular Description of Courses by Type*

(a) preremedial
(b) remedial
(c) freshman composition
(d) advanced composition
(e) graduate program

1. Composition program structure

   (a) commonalities among classes (within a category above)
      - grading criteria
      - common activities
      - common goals
   (b) teacher evaluation
      - tenure track and tenured
      - other

2. Instructional formats

   (a) classroom format
      - lecture
      - discussion
      - workshop
      - small group
      - individualized
      - tutors
      - student-teacher conferences
   (b) other, supplemental or adjunct "services" (delivery formats)
      - tutors
      - learning or skills center
      - computer-assisted instruction or other auto-tutorial methods
      - counseling, testing

3. Instructional activities

   (a) assignments
      - assignment characteristics: length, frequency, mode, setting (home, school, lab), proportion completed
      - in each setting
      - assignment context: prewriting, revising, how assignments are given out and explained, planning opportunity and context
      - syllabus

*The taxonomy above is applicable to each course type.

Table 9 (continued)

3. Instructional activities (continued)

(b) response to writing
- marking papers: quantity and purpose of feedback
- feedback method: oral with class, oral with individual, written
- nature of feedback: priorities, emphases, tone
- relationship of feedback to instruction: used in class, variety of audiences
- grading

(c) classroom instruction
- content
- methods
- materials
- sequencing

importance of these supplemental services has not been demonstrated, but the project team feels there was a strong likelihood that some of them are associated with positive student outcomes.

Finally, instructional activities themselves are likely to be among the most significant program features. We need to know how much writing is assigned, how often, and for what purpose; we need to inquire about how assignments are given out and explained, and how much pre-writing and revision take place. We need to discover and describe the content of classroom instruction, the methods and materials used, and the sequencing that shapes the curriculum. And, perhaps most important of all, we need to describe the teacher's response to writing, i.e., the quantity, nature, purpose, and method of feedback to the student writer, and the relationship of that feedback to the instruction in class.

Composition Program Faculty

With respect to the composition faculty, the research team identified several taxonomic categories, arranged under five principal headings: demographics, experience and education, motivation, philosophy of composition, and teaching practices.

Demographic categories include ethnicity, sex, and age. More or less strenuous efforts in recent years to recruit racial minorities as composition teachers are reflected in the ethnic makeup of composition staffs. The kinds of

Table 10

Composition Program Faculty*

1. Demographics
   (a) general
      - ethnicity
      - sex
      - age
   (b) job related
      - time on campus; distance from campus
      - status: tenure track, part or full time, t.a.

2. Experience and education
   (a) educational background
      - training
      - graduate school
      - teacher assistant
      - courses
      - faculty development
      - research, publications, grants
   (b) related experience
      - time on this campus (years)
      - total time teaching
      - time teaching composition
      - time at other campuses, with other student groups

3. Motivation
   (a) professionalism
      - main field of focus (English, rhetoric, linguistics, composition, other)
      - attitude toward composition, toward teaching composition
      - demonstrated interest: grants, conferences, publications in composition
      - attitude toward students
   (b) faculty development
      - courses outside campus (voluntary, required)
      - in-service, "retraining" (voluntary, required)
   (c) morale
      - sense of autonomy
      - sense of efficacy
      - expectations for students (effect of student)

4. Philosophy of composition
   (a) "why do you do what you do?"
      - sequencing
      - course grading

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*Applies to services personnel outside the composition classroom, e.g., in the Learning Center or Counseling Center.

Table 10 (continued)

5. Practices

(a) assignments
- assignment characteristics
- assignment context
- syllabus

(b) response to writing
- marking papers
- feedback method
- nature of feedback
- relationship to in-class instruction

(c) classroom instruction and format
- grading for course
- content
- methods
- materials
- sequence

special programs developed for minority students sometimes depend upon a staff with similar background. It is, however, by no means clear whether separate classes or integrated ones are more to the benefit of most minority students, nor is it clear that teachers are more effective if they share the same background with their students. Similar issues revolve around the numbers of men and women teaching composition. Age, as well, may turn out to be significant; younger teachers may be more sympathetic to writing topics that engage young writers, while more experienced teachers may be wiser and more skilled in their teaching approaches and expectations. Because any one of these issues may turn out to be very important for the composition program, a careful description of the composition faculty logically begins with these demographics.

Education and experience in the area of composition may be expected to be of considerable importance to faculty description. Traditionally, English faculty at the college level are trained in the study of literature or, to a lesser extent, linguistics or rhetoric. The training in writing offered in Ph.D. programs usually consists of some on-the-job supervision (sometimes quite desultory) while the candidate is teaching a section or two of composition during the writing of the dissertation. Until recently, the teaching of writing received neither attention, research, nor prestige in the education of most college English professors. For

this reason, many English faculty who received their training more than ten years ago (that is, almost all senior professors) have had little or no formal education in the teaching of writing. We may discover, however, that many senior faculty in The California State University closely follow the recent developments in composition and have effectively trained themselves in the field. Others may not have either the interest or the time to keep up with a field that is peripheral to their training.

In recent years, newer Ph.D.s are more likely to have a systematic knowledge of composition as a field. Since most jobs in college English departments have consisted largely of composition teaching, and since there have been many applicants for each job, those with training in composition have found themselves better able to compete. Thus, in recent years, many of those receiving the English Ph.D. have had some education and experience in composition. Nonetheless, since it remains unusual to find a major Ph.D.-granting English department with a senior scholar in composition, and since academic fields change slowly, most of the scholars in composition are still self-taught. Thus, it is particularly useful to identify faculty with publications, grants and ongoing research in the field, since at this time such evidence of professional activity indicates an unusual level of responsibility and energy. It may not be true, however, that scholarly activity translates into an improved writing

instruction program. Conclusions in this area will only be possible after the entire research project is complete - if, indeed, conclusions are possible at all.

While all campuses in our study (and the overwhelming majority of American campuses in general) require composition teaching, reward good teaching, and speak of honoring professional activity in the field, we knew there was a considerable variation in practice. Some composition programs appear to foster faculty composition ativity much more than do others; or, perhaps faculty with active composition interests foster such programs. The programs in the study do give evidence of a wide range of faculty professional activity in composition, a range perhaps typical of American higher education in general.

There also seems to be a wide variation from campus to campus in the attitude composition faculty manifest towards each other, their students, and their work. This general area, which the research team called "morale," seems to be a result of many different factors, all of which are difficult to detect and to measure. Nonetheless, since such components of morale as the sense of teacher efficacy or expectation of student performance suggest program differences, it was decided to include "morale" as part of faculty motivation on the taxonomy.

Finally, faculty theories of composition and instructional practices are obviously central to description of composition

programs. We expected to find faculty grouping themselves in several fairly clear-cut categories of approaches to composition in theory and in practice. For example, there are those who feel strongly that reading instruction is integral to writing instruction, or that systematic revision is essential to teaching the writing process. It is interesting to compare individual faculty statements on such matters, actual classroom practices, and the views of program administrators. Since composition research, including the planned future phases of this study, seeks to evaluate the comparative effectiveness of these various approaches for various groupings of students, it is critically important to discover what teachers are in fact doing (or, at least, what they assert they are doing) and why.

Composition Students

The academic background and demographic characteristics of the student body have an obvious and important impact upon the composition program. Despite the apparent similarity in admission standards, there are major differences in the student populations on the various campuses in the study.

Tables 1 and 2 in Chapter Five show the geographic settings and ethnic representation on these campuses. Such program features as Chicano studies or Black studies writing courses obviously depend upon adequate populations seeking to enroll in such classes. Again, campuses located in or

near inner-city locations will enroll more students with lower socio-economic status (SES) than rural campuses with a high proportion of students in residence; low SES is often associated with weak academic skills in general. More directly, the writing skill level of entering students varies greatly on the English Placement Test which is used to place freshmen in regular or remedial English levels.

These and other differences from campus to campus help give rise to composition program features that reflect the needs of the students. Student characteristics, training, and ability levels need to be considered if a campus writing program is to be fully described. Thus, a very small remedial writing component, or none at all might reflect the absence of need on one campus while it could be evidence of ignoring an important need on another.

Finally, as this research moves into its evaluative phase, the consideration of student outcomes from the composition program will become prominent. Since we will be seeking differences in outcome for similar groupings of students, careful description of student characteristics will be necessary so that the findings of the study will be meaningful.

Table 11

Composition Program Students

1. Demographics
   - (a) student descriptive questionnaires
   - (b) nonacademic record of entry (high school)
     - high school GPA, SAT scores
     - EPT scores

2. "Outcomes"
   - (a) academic record (postsecondary)
     - courses completed, GPA, units
     - upper division requirement
   - (b) other
     - attitudes, anxiety about writing, self-concept
     - essay sample

Summary

The taxonomy presented here portrays the set of program features, in the college context, that the research team proposed as a guide for informed data gathering. It represents both an organized and descriptive frame for program features and an informed (though data-free) series of postulates about what might turn out to be associated with positive outcomes for students and faculty. The taxonomy was a basic theoretical construct that allowed the project to gather data. The research team was aware that some of the descriptive features were likely to emerge as far more significant than others, as the data from the campus programs began to fill in, or sometimes, alter the theoretical structure. Nonetheless, the taxonomy survived the test of the real world surprisingly well; the data collected from faculty and

administrators generally confirm the picture of program features portrayed. The taxonomy became the basic tool for organizing our research, and stands as a useful guide to program administrators, researchers, and teachers.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Results of Interview Analysis

This section describes the process and results of our analysis of interviews, augmented by Fact Sheet data. In winter of 1981, we interviewed 57 people on ten campuses. On each campus we spoke with the academic vice president, the dean of humanities (or arts), the English department chair, the composition program coordinator, and the director of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). In addition, on several campuses we found and interviewed remedial course coordinators, learning assistance center directors, upper division requirement coordinators, or directors of writing programs housed outside of the English department. These interviews were taped and the tapes later transcribed.

We divided the transcriptions into numbered sections (using an arbitrary but constant size rule based on turn-taking in the interview conversation). We asked each research panelist (five), all of whom had done interviewing, to code each numbered passage according to main conversational topics. The code scheme for possible topics was based upon the taxonomy of writing programs, modified through several training sessions in interview coding.

Each interview was coded by two raters. Interview passages and their set of two code numbers were entered into

a computer data base. Frequency counts of code numbers indicated for which topics we had the most, and most diverse, information. In this way we identified eight topics for first priority analysis.

These topics were further reduced in number to five, by considering the results of our factor analysis of questionnaire data. We hoped in our first major reporting effort to provide a coherent and thorough discussion of major findings rather chan a disjointed listing of data. Thus we settled upon the following five issues, each of which considers a slightly different level of issues and each of which has a corresponding questionnaire-based descriptive factor or factors.

Table 12

Interview Topics for Analysis

1. Composition program goals and instructional philosophies.
2. Composition program coordinator's activities and responsibilities.
3. Remedial instruction: procedures and resources.
4. The upper-division writing requirement: procedures and policies.
5. Non-English department composition activities, such as tutoring, EOP.

Our next step was to read through the coded sections of interviews for each topic. This time readers did not rate or code passages further. Instead they let the remarks of

the interviewee suggest aspects of the topic area that should be noted. After all note taking activity had been completed for one topic area, readers met and discussed their notes and impressions. First, readers agreed upon a descriptor for the topic area and, then, aided by their notes and quotes from the transcriptions, the group worked out categories distinguishing campuses within that descriptor heading. Sometimes what had originally been one descriptor was broken down into two or more separate but related aspects of the original topic. Then within each new descriptor, categories were created. Sometimes a descriptor not only remained intact, but offered only two mutually exclusive categories.

Following agreement on the topical analysis of the interviews, we wrote up prose drafts explicating these analyses and offering quotations in support of analysis conclusions. These "vignettes" were circulated among the analysis group.

After some discussion, we decided to indicate in which categories campus programs had been placed for each descriptor. However, by doing so we do not mean to imply that these analyses are based upon and yield facts. They do not. They are perceptions and personal beliefs and their analysis yields impressions of how the world works on each campus. The utility of our analyses is to identify program patterns, not to compare individual campuses. In fact, as we began to

discriminate groupings of campus programs we found that two of our ten campuses have additional fully developed writing programs outside the English department.

In these two non-English department programs, writing program directors coordinate the courses and instructors much the way their English department colleagues do. On campus J, a large suburban campus, two departments outside of English offer complete writing programs. These two departments, Chicano Studies and Pan-African Studies, each with its own composition coordinator, do not serve only minority ethnic group students, though that has been their primary responsibility. It is important to include these separate programs with their own identification, since they are legitimate programs and, incidentally, expand the usefulness of the research.

To identify multiple programs on a single campus, we agreed to treat these programs separately from the English department operations. The "B" notation denotes the non-English department programs. This distinction is used only for complete, discrete writing programs, programs with a sequence of courses comparable to those we might find in an English department. Departments that simply offer a functionally equivalent course, i.e., accepted in lieu of an English department course, have not been considered as providing separate writing <u>programs</u>. This definition and identification of Q(B) and J(B) holds true for these campuses

on other topics in our interview analysis, and we continue referring to the different programs using these notations in our discussions below.

1. Composition Program Goals and Instructional Philosophies

One of the most frequently used code categories for the interviews describes the goals and underlying philosophy of the composition program. We specifically asked this of composition program coordinators, but references to program goals and philosophy also surfaced in interviews with remedial coordinators, English chairs, learning center directors, EOP directors, deans, and academic vice presidents.

Reviewing our notes on these coded passages, we further refined our category definition. We agreed that what we wanted to know was not the personal philosophy or private goals of the composition program coordinator. Rather, we sought indications of a programmatic response. This, we expected, would be identifiable as (1) systematic and unified in nature; (2) specified in writing, either as a handbook, or guideline, or common or sample syllabus; and (3) reportedly widely embraced or generally adhered to by composition instructors. After much discussion of notes and presentation of interview passages as "evidence," we agreed that programs that we could identify between programs that do meet these criteria (systematic, specified, widely embraced) and those that do not. However, our interview data suggested that a further delineation was necessary. Some programs do

include such unifying features as curriculum guidelines, course descriptions, handbooks, sample syllabuses. While many of these same programs include statements of expected outcomes, i.e., goals, others cover only instructional approaches, i.e., "philosophy." There is an additional complication in defining both goals and philosophies: for some programs this information applies only to the freshman composition course(s); for others, just the remedial coursework; for still others, both regular and remedial instruction are covered.

a. Laissez-faire. A meaningful distinguishing characteristic among programs with goals statements is the "seriousness" with which these statements are taken. To a large extent, this distinction reflects our original criterion, "widely embraced" goals and philosophy. While all composition coordinators interviewed report the existence of guidelines or course descriptions, some admit they haven't seen a copy in years, while others produced for our interviewer hundred-page documents and described instructor training. Thus, at one extreme we could label as "laissez faire" campus programs where course guidelines are "available" if someone asks, but where there isn't an active attempt to ensure widespread adoption of these guidelines. Also distinguishing the "laissez faire" programs is the absence of a specific goals statement. While guidelines or sample syllabuses provide instructional recommendations, they do not specify the

skills or knowledge students are expected to acquire through this instruction. In short, these programs have a limited "programmatic" nature and leave a good deal of their domain uncharted.

The three programs we identify as "laissez-faire" are campuses F, H, and I. Programs F and H are large, urban campuses known for their extensive use of part-time instructors (50% of the department staff). Program I is a mid-sized polytechnical school located in a suburban, almost rural, community. To demonstrate our laissez-faire definition and our decision to label programs F, H, and I as such, we offer the following exchanges between the interviewer (INT) and the composition program directors (COMP).

PROGRAM F

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy, a set of goals for the composition program?

COMP: In this university?

INT: In this department.

COMP: Universally held, probably not. I think the diversity of the 100 sections, it's hard to-- there is, in our statement about what the course, that it's a course in expository writing, if that's a philosophy. I guess it can be answered in two different ways: Among the 100 plus sections, no, in theory, yes. There is our statement which says clearly it's a course in expository writing not in literary analysis. That students will write. But it can't be taken for granted that in every section they write... the papers will be responded to and students will have an opportunity to respond to the response, to write to show that

they have learned. The writing is--what we're trying to impress on everbody is that this is a writing process.

INT: Do you get into matters of particular approaches to rhetoric, anything of that sort, the pre-writing, revision process idea?

COMP: Certainly the most coherent theory probably exists among the TAs because they've all been following through my class. The first words on the board are writing is a process, writing is discovery. And for their sections, I think they all know that. They're good people. They're really splendid. And I think writing is a process in their class. And it is responded to and worked on again and in many of the part-timers, that's true, for maybe a third of them. The faculty, I don't know really what happens in faculty sections. I never see their evaluations. I've been in one faculty member's writing class on his request. I hear rumors from some others, but I don't really know what happens.

INT: There are no syllabuses for the comp. classes?

COMP: Individual course loads--nothing resembling a departmental syllabus.

INT: Just ones the individuals prepare for themselves?

COMP: Right.

PROGRAM I

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for the comp. program?

COMP: There probably is.

INT: Do you have copies of the objectives of those...?

COMP: Yes.

INT: Do you try in the comp. committee to make explicit and articulate some philosophy?

COMP: I think not....although we collect textbooks. We put together a list of textbooks in this department. That probably does more in controlling what actually goes on in the classrooms.

INT: How well do you feel you know what goes on in composition classes?

COMP: I don't know much about what goes on in all composition classes, but I know more about what goes on in the comp. classrooms, the sections, taught by our part-timers, because at the end of the quarter I ask them to hand in to me a copy of their syllabus and the essay finals and they come and talk to me.

INT: Do you have impressions on what's going on, say, in the full-time faculty classrooms?

COMP: Yes. I have impressions--I don't know how accurate they are. They are based on either what they tell me they are doing and I am also very suspicious when someone comes up and starts sort of boasting....the department chair might be able to help you more.

PROGRAM H

INT: Do you see anything like an underlying philosophy or goals for the comp. program?

COMP: I hope that one is emerging and that is, I think, basically what the composition committee has been directing itself to this fall. The history of the composition program here is that we used to be a department of literature that taught some composition and I think now it would be more accurate to say we are a department of composition that teaches some literature. Certainly that's true in terms of our FTE [full-time equivalent student enrollment].

INT: Does the department have any kind of, while you're putting together those goals statements, any other kind of guideline for people teaching comp.?

COMP: No, there hasn't been. The only guidelines that have existed have been rather general and perfunctory descriptions of the courses that

appear in the university catalog. But I suspect that most faculty members have not even looked at those.

In sum, these three programs neither pursue a unified program of instruction nor do they have mechanisms for doing so. Their instructional approaches are described in a limited manner, by a catalog course description or recommended texts, and no one is expected to pay them very much attention. Further, the composition coordinators do not explicate or disseminate a goals statement for composition courses. In all three cases, the composition coordinators suggest that attempts to generate a greater "programmatic" approach would meet with a great deal of opposition, particularly from regular tenure-track and tenured faculty.

The balance of our interview campuses have more actively and successfully established a structured program of instruction. Nevertheless, we find a distinguishing factor divides these more organized programs into two types. This characteristic might best be called "scope" or "breadth" of program goals and philosophy statements. The distinction describes the degree of planned articulation among courses, particularly between remedial and regular composition. Six of the remaining nine program coordinators describe an instructional philosophy for remedial and regular instruction. For three other programs, instructional philosophies articulated by their coordinators apply only to remedial coursework. All nine of

these program coordinators explained their program's intended outcomes for students, though again for three programs the goals are restricted to remedial students.

b. Remedial Only. The three composition programs where goals and instructional philosophies are restricted to remedial courses are J(A), E, and C. J(A) is on a large, suburban campus, E is on a large, urban campus, and program C is on a polytechnic campus in a largely rural setting. The first common feature among these programs is the apparent disinterest in establishing program goals or an instructional philosophy for freshman composition. Instead, attention is devoted to remedial courses. Queried about their regular freshman composition instruction, these program coordinators sound very much like their "laissez-faire" colleagues.

PROGRAM J(A)

INT: And in the 155 [freshman comp.] in your course description, do you include something like a description of the standards you expect students to meet in order to pass that course?

COMP: No, we don't. Probably should, but we don't. Our department is so individualistic, that they have a hard time agreeing and feeling that someone else is going to impose what they are going to do. That is why we could not get the holistic grading for the upper division requirement.

INT: Do you feel you would like greater uniformity in the structure of the program?

COMP: Composition is very hard to teach for the [literature specialist]. And the need to have changes and variety and experiment with things--I would hate to have enough conformity that it would not allow, really, experimentation.

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for the composition program? Is it written down somewhere? Can I get a copy?

COMP: Of our philosophy? No, we don't have our philosophy written down anywhere. The theory is that we make students into better writers. ...The English composition committee has good drafts and very, very loose guidelines for 114 (freshman comp.)...and distributes them to the department at large. ...But they are so general--not to mean a great deal.

INT: I would not mind getting it.

COMP: Yes, but otherwise, there is no need to because there are going to be some people that are trained in a particular way--you don't want to give them any further guidelines.

INT: Are there uniform exams, grades, or other standards in dealing with the course--the freshman course for instance?

COMP: No.

INT: Do you feel that you would like greater uniformity in the structure of the program?

COMP: I wish that we could have a, more of an effect on what the full-time faculty are doing. Outside of that, no.

None of these campuses has a particularly well coordinated program of instruction for regular composition classes. However, while program J(A) is not actively pursuing establishment of freshman composition program features, E and C show some movement toward structure. Unfortunately, as with most programs, their composition coordinators exercise their authority chiefly in respect to part-time lecturers and

teaching assistants. Accordingly, in these two programs a higher degree of commonality exists among composition sections taught by these staff members than among those covered by full-time, regular faculty. (This part-timer/ full-timer distinction is covered in greater detail under the composition coordinator category described later.)

Nevertheless, the remedial coursework for programs J(A), E, and C is much more highly specified than is the regular composition coursework. In fact, two of these three programs (except E) have a separate remedial program coordinator in addition to their composition coordinator. Program E's composition coordinator reports a uniform midterm in all remedial classes, a single common textbook, a required training course for instructors, sequential curriculum, and specific expectations for students. Campus program J(A)'s remedial coordinator tells of common midterm and final exams, a course guideline, a common text, and agreement on methods. The remedial coordinator for program C describes, with the exception of common exams, a similar degree of specificity and commonality. For all three of the programs, the coordinators make it clear that a large part of their success in establishing common goals and philosophy is due to the fact that remedial instructors are almost exclusively part-timers or teaching assistants (graduate students).

These differences in the amount of focus and control between the regular freshman composition courses and remedial

instruction are remarkably distinctive. Compare, for example, program E coordinator's remarks about remedial coursework (below) with his remarks about composition (just above).

PROGRAM E

INT: Is there any philosophy or set of goals or is it the same ones for the regular program?

COMP: Well, yes. There is a very specific set of goals for English 104 [remedial]. At the end of the first half of the semester we want the students to be able to proof read their own writing accurately. The theory behind that is these very, very inexperienced writers literally do not see what they have written. They see only what they meant to write. And so we...(on for 1-1/2 single-spaced pages).

INT: These are taught by part-timers?

COMP: Yes, exclusively.

INT: Then you know what goes on in the course?

COMP: Yes.

INT: And you have a pretty tight syllabus for that class, section by section?

COMP: Yes.

INT: Do you have uniform exams?

COMP: We have a uniform midterm, but not final.

INT: Do you feel that is adequate uniformity?

COMP: Yes. ...they have gone through the training course and they are either MA candidates or people who have completed their MA's in either literature or creative writing.

In sum, while these programs do seem to succeed in establishing and maintaining a set of instructional goals

and theory for remedial instruction, these same programs are less concerned about their coordination of regular freshman composition classes. Although each composition coordinator makes it clear that he or she has little knowledge of or power of persuasion over full-time instructors, this in and of itself cannot explain the lack of a programmatic structure in the composition coursework. The six other programs in our interview sample share the same staffing characteristics, yet each manages to present a program of goals and instructional theory guiding both freshman and remedial composition.

c. Remedial and Regular Composition. Interviews gathered on the six remaining writing programs suggest that specific goals and philosophical or theoretical approaches underlie writing coursework, and that these programmatic features provide for some measure of cohesion among instructors in both remedial and regular freshman composition. The six programs are J(B), D, Q(A), Q(B), S and G. Perhaps it is no coincidence that four of these six programs are found on smaller, suburban campuses: Q(A), Q(B), S and G. The fifth campus program J(B), although housed on a large suburban campus, actually refers to two programs each in a small department outside English (Chicano Studies, Pan-African Studies). The campus D program is the only one found in the English department of a large, urban campus.

Program D has divided control of its writing program between the English department composition coordinator and the Writing Lab director who is the remedial coordinator.

All remedial assistance is provided in the English department lab, either as workshop or regular coursework. Nevertheless, both coordinators articulate clear goals for their students and specific strategies upon which instruction is based. Further, both interviews suggest an active interrelationship between lab and department courses, and personnel. (In the excerpts below, REML stands for remedial coordinator.)

PROGRAM D

INT: How well do you feel you know what goes on in composition classes? How about full-time, part-time and TAs; do you have an idea what happens within the classes?

COMP: Fairly well. More than I would have thought possible. The [common] final exam allows a great deal of that to occur. The common final exam, not just for being able to go back over and work with the statistics and the calculator, but the committee work that comes prior to that, working with people and setting up the topics, talking about the theory of composition. They bring in topics, possible topics. You learn something about it; you make comments and make an effect on people and vice versa, "you can't make students write on that." Also, the reading sessions, where you spend a whole day with all your comp. staff, at every level, and they're talking about composition. That's the focus and prior to that, everybody went his own separate way and you never really--you really didn't know what was going on....

INT: Is there any underlying philosophy for the remedial program?

REML: I think so. I think we try to come at them in two different directions. One, we build sentences in a positive skill performance. Sentence building sequence that does not emphasize errors. We emphasize writing performance in building up

skills by patterning practice and things like that. At the other end of the scale, we try to give them large volumes of writing. Free writing journals, daily writing, open discussion. Very little evaluation. So they have got freedom in the Composition component with a lot of journal writing and open-ended assignments. And the discipline in the sentence level. Now, I think those two--they are balancing factors. We try to maximize the discipline in the sentence part of it. Anyway that is what I try to instill in the teachers. Writing should be a joy. Sometimes it is a laborious joy.

INT: How well do you know what goes on in the remedial sections.

REML: I visit. I talk. I know the teachers personally.

INT: Do you furnish syllabi or syllabuses for the remedial classes?

REML: I have guidelines specifying the number of assignments, the kinds of assignments, the lab work, word volume. And my composition book is used in about half the classes. So that is another kind of influence.

INT: But nobody has to use the textbook? They can choose their own textbooks?

REML: They all have to use the lab textbook for the lab part of it. So the lab text is uniform. They all have to use the lab textbook.

INT: And then they can use other text.

REML: Oh, sure. There is a wide variety. Some use short stories and very little text. And some people use a handbook. There are all different kinds of approaches.

INT: They follow the guidelines though.

REML: They all follow the guidelines, right.

INT: You have got a uniform final. Would you like greater uniformity in the remedial program or are you satisfied with it?

REML: No. I think we are the right--we have tried to strike the right balance between the consensus and agreement and individual styles and methods.

The J(B) programs reside in the two ethnic studies departments (Chicano, Pan-African). In both cases the writing program is small, run by one person, and staffed primarily by part-timers or non-tenure track full-time lecturers. This may account for the control the writing coordinators exert in specifying instructional goals and approaches.

PROGRAM J(B)

COMP #1

INT: Would you say that there is anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for this total composition program?

COMP #1: Yes, we have, of course, the whole notion of students developing facility in the use of the language, both written and oral, of college level proficiency such as what would be an accomplishment equal to any other college level proficiency. So, therefore, we teach them how to read and how to interpret what they read and how to think critically and clearly, and to express your ideas in writing. The main goal is to see, of course, that students can do that and do it to the best of their ability and at a level that is [at least the] minimum for any college student.

INT: Is this written down somewhere--what you've just described?

COMP #1: Yes.

INT: ...do you feel you know what goes on in the composition classes?

COMP #1: Reasonably well. We have staff meetings and we have a small enough staff that we can talk to each other very frankly about what is going on.

INT: And you mentioned--did you use syllabuses?

COMP #1: Yes.

INT: The faculty follow these syllabuses pretty regularly?

COMP #1: Yes. They are supposed to and I think that they do. ...Yes and we all use the same text. ...The main thing that I have initiated in the staff development sessions is that writing should be viewed as a process. Students do their papers, the teacher reads them, grades them and makes comments and then they are asked and required to revise them.

INT: And there are in fact uniform exams and standard in these courses?

COMP #1: Yes. We have our departmental essay.

INT: In both the developmental (remedial) and the 150 courses (comp.)?

COMP #1: Right.

INT: But is it true that--the fact that the members of the staff that participate jointly in this kind of enterprise--that a set of common standards pretty much evolved pragmatically?

COMP #1: That is right exactly. I think it is true that we have a set of standards. We do have standards written out...used in determining what level a student falls into. For example, we have a standard for C or B. ...But I think we have a healthy uniformity and we allow for diversity within it. I think you ought to allow instructors to exercise some options.

PROGRAM J(B)

COMP #2

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for this composition program?

COMP #2: Depends on the course. I think the remedial courses we are just simply trying to get those people to read and write at what we think is college level writing--to be able to take the regular freshman course with some degree of success. See, our students are sometimes recent immigrants. So they really need an ESL approach. Others are second generation, third generation--we really get a mixture...We try to tailor-make it. And it is very hard to have an underlying philosophy for that. Now by the time they get to freshman English we hope that they are all, that is the regular university requirement, we hope that they are all at least at the writing level that would pass the [systemwide] English Placement Test with a score of at least 145 or better.

INT: Do you have information about goals or objectives in the program written down any place?

COMP #2: Yes.

INT: Do you feel that you have a pretty good idea of what is going on in the composition classes in the department?

COMP #2: Yes. We are small enough--we are only about five instructors--that it is not difficult to keep tabs on what is going on.

INT: Do you have syllabuses for your comp. classes?

COMP #2: We have standardized textbooks that we will use in each class. We have a general course outline but it is--I would not call it a syllabus, because each instructor is allowed quite a bit of freedom.

INT: And your sense is that the faculty follows these guidelines?

COMP #2: Yes. We keep track of that too, through the meetings we have - the writing committee meetings and the little training workshops that we have on Saturdays once in a while.

INT: Who chooses the textbooks? The committee as a whole?

COMP #2: As a group. We had pretty much decided on the same grammar book. We use different reading

anthologies but we have agreed that we will all use an anthology rather than to bring in a bunch of miscellaneous articles.

INT: Even informally, have you a kind of consensus in the department in the writing program about what students are expected to know...?

COMP #2: ...And the 50% of the final that is not the holistic writing is on the grammar book. So now, we know that they have covered the seven chapters in grammar, the paragraph, the term paper. And they have had the essay so they get the gestalt of the whole thing.

INT: There is considerable uniformity.

COMP #2: Oh, yes...I like it the way it is.

In sum, these six programs exhibit a higher degree of direction. They have goals and specific instructional orientations. These are not simply paper structures; common exams, extensive guidelines, required texts, and training sessions, all contribute toward the faithful implementation of program goals and philosophies articulated by the interviewees. Further, these qualities exist for regular and remedial writing coursework.

2. Composition Program Coordinator's Activities and Responsibilities

This category, as used in interview coding, included reports of the responsibilities and activities of composition coordinators. Early in the development of the interview protocols we realized there might be a difference between program responsibilities undertaken voluntarily and those

responsibilities that are traditionally part of the job description. We decided to gather information on both but to try to distinguish between them. Several of the campus programs in our interview sample do in fact have dynamic hard-working individuals who have assumed responsibilities beyond the call of duty. For this reason we maintain this concept in our descriptions of composition program coordinators in this report.

a. Remedial Too. The easiest distinguishing characteristic to identify is whether or not the composition coordinator is also responsible for remedial writing instruction. Five composition coordinators in our interview sample of twelve do oversee remedial writing instruction. These five are coordinators of programs E, J(B), Q(A), Q(B), and S.

Two of these five are the non-English department programs, J(B) and Q(B), and are small in size. It is not surprising then that their composition coordinators manage all aspects of the writing course offerings.

Programs E, Q(A), and S, though seemingly large enough to divide responsibilities between composition and remedial coordinators, do not do so. The Q(A) program, interestingly, has recently enlarged its remedial offering (see description in section on Remedial Instruction). This effort has largely been promoted by the English department chair. In fact, the operations of the Q(A) program are distinguished by the degree of involvement and interest on the part of the department chair (ENGL).

INT: [Composition Coordinator] talked about the way the comp. chair and the department chair work together presently, with the two of you occupying the positions. What's your perception of the way the department chair and comp. chair should operate?

ENGL: I'm trying to maintain a very delicate balance between being supportive and helpful on the one hand and trying not to meddle on the other.

INT: Now as far as policies in the pamphlet are concerned--the books, the goals and objectives of the courses--do you feel that you, as chair, have any part in administering those? That is, seeing to it that those matters of department policy are carried out in classes?

ENGL: Yes. I would feel that if, for example, we were having problems with someone who is perhaps abusing or refusing to follow the guidelines, I would feel very comfortable about talking to that person. [Composition Coordinator] would get the first and primary responsibility but I certainly would support him fully and if that means talking to the person, I would do it.

In addition to the involvement of the English chair, the Q(A) composition coordinator shares responsibilities with the composition committee. Asked about the development of the decision to expand the two-unit remedial adjunct to a full-fledged four-unit course, the composition chair replies that it "was a recommendation of the composition committee to the department as a whole." Throughout both Q(A) department chair and composition coordinator interviews there are extensive references to the role of the composition committee in initiating and affecting policy changes. As the composition

coordinator says, "So far as I know, all topics that bear directly on the composition program come to my committee. They're discussed there."

The other two programs in this category (joint responsibility for regular and remedial composition) are similar to each other but quite different from the Q(A) program. For these two, E and S, remedial instruction responsibilities have been undertaken by the composition coordinator by choice, with little assistance from others in the department, either chair or committee members. These coordinators are examples of the dynamic leader whose extensive workload is largely the result of personal choice. The courses these two are responsible for are largely staffed by part-timers and graduate TAs. This factor may contribute to the clarity of purpose and the cohesiveness established among the writing instructors.

PROGRAM S

COMP: My main responsibilities are training the part-time composition people, who get more numerous every quarter; keeping up some kind of communication among all the people who teach composition on all levels. That audience changes every quarter. And I try to get them together to discuss methods, textbooks, writing assignments--that sort of thing.

INT: Are any of those pet projects? Part of the job or becoming part of the job?

COMP: They are becoming part of the job. We just scheduled a composition retreat, for example--one of them in the mountains--just for people who are solely responsible for teaching composition--part

and full time. That's all they do. And the retreat was wonderful; we talked about things from policy decisions all the way to methods. I always chose remedial courses first [to teach] and developed the remedial program from nothing--without any title of any sort--when I first got into the department. We had a single course that was supposed to serve all of the purposes of the various remedial students. And now we have three [courses]...

PROGRAM E

INT: Are there any particular ideas or pet projects to which you've devoted a lot of time?

COMP: The comp. program, the remedial course, a job had to be done from scratch, the remedial course had to be done from scratch, the teaching writing courses from scratch, the hiring procedure from scratch, the part-time instructors....

INT: Who really has the clout for composition decisions for campuswide policies?

COMP: It covers a lot of territory. For most day-to-day and basic policy matters, I really have the clout. And for campus-wide policies on writing... there is the university literacy committee....

The program E coordinator also runs the training course required of all instructors (regular or contract) before they may teach writing courses.

These two program coordinators have both stepped into a vacuum in leadership and interest in composition and have taken on the tasks of revising the remedial program, of seeking continuity and quality in part-timers' instruction, and of retraining faculty (though both admit difficulties in getting meaningful participation from tenured faculty).

In short, in this category describing composition coordinator whose responsibilities include regular and remedial writing program administration, we find a variety of situations lead to the same end. Two programs, Q(B) and J(B), include remedial responsibilities in their comp. coordinator's role because the size of the department writing program is very small, manageable by one person. The third program coordinator, for Q(A), shares his load with a very active department chair and composition committee. The fourth and fifth composition program coordinators, on campuses E and S, choose to take on the remedial responsibilities as part of their job.

The remaining seven program coordinators we interviewed do not include remedial programs in their description of responsibilities and activities. Each of these programs does in fact have a separate titular head of remediation, i.e., a remedial program coordinator.

Our interviews uncovered a wide range of activities that are carried out by all or nearly all twelve program coordinators. The first of these common activities is chairing the composition committee in the department. Not surprisingly, then, the second common involvement is in the development of policies and procedures for the composition program, often done in conjunction with the composition committee. Other activities and responsibilities follow.

b. Supervision of Part-timers. Almost all our program coordinators claimed responsibility for the "training" and evaluation, however cursory, of their part-time instructors. For the most part, these program coordinators participate in hiring decisions too, either as committee members or by direct responsibility for that task. Here are typical descriptions:

PROGRAM E

INT: You participate primarily in selecting the part-time faculty?

COMP: Yes, it's done by the English composition committee. I'm chair of that committee and I have one vote. The new instructors have to take an in-service course during the first semester of teaching. I don't have to monitor what goes on in the part-time instructors' classes. I found out a long time ago, years ago, when I was really worried about it. They are homogeneously trained. And their hiring process is so meticulous and thorough that anybody who survives it is automatically guaranteed to be compulsive.

PROGRAM S

INT: What about hiring staff?

COMP: [English department chair] and I both interview for the hiring of part-time staff.

INT: Can you say why...you are directing a program and you don't really know very much of what people are doing and you say you are comfortable?

COMP: Yes. We know that we have trained them. We know that we have exchange sessions constantly on methods. We have policy meetings where I have contact with them. And the ultimate proof of

their success...lies with the student evaluation... We read those comments with a fine tooth comb for evaluating.

INT: Since the department has adopted these [goals] official policies--And the part-time instructors see these, I take it, and talk with you about them when they're hired?

COMP: That is part of their training which I do as they are hired--one on one.

PROGRAM C

INT: What are your main responsibilities?

COMP: I have tried to put in place training TAs, TA courses, try to stay in constant touch with the TAs. Part-timers...I have implemented a system [so that] nobody can be placed on a priority [hiring] list without my consent.

INT: Your part-timers and TAs only--do you know pretty much what goes on in the classroom?

COMP: I think I do. I will visit a class where somebody feels it is a problem. But we have full-timers evaluating the part-timers once a year. And each part-timer or TA is evaluated by two full-timers.

There are only two programs whose coordinators are exceptions to this common involvement of composition coordinators in hiring, monitoring, and evaluating part-timers and TAs: programs D and H. In both these writing programs, composition coordinators are excluded from the hiring process, which occurs through a specific departmental personnel committee. For program D, monitoring and evaluation of the part-timers and TAs has been passed to the remedial coordinator, primarily in an attempt to reduce the composition coordinator's

workload. For program H, the remedial coordinator has major responsibility for part-time and TA staff and yet is excluded from the hiring committee. Both D and H remedial coordinators also direct the departmental writing lab where remedial coursework and tutoring occur.

c. Faculty Retraining. Those working in the world of college composition programs use the term, "faculty development" or "retraining," to refer to an entire range of activities whose goal is to help ease the transition for the literature-trained faculty who must now function as writing class instructors. These activities can be as marginal as circulating a research article or as vigorous as a complete graduate course in composition theory.

For the most part, all our interviewees describe the reluctance and even adamant refusal of regular tenured and tenure-track faculty to take on lower division writing class instruction. Composition program coordinators, then, find themselves in a position to "ease" this situation and, perhaps, to upgrade instructional quality by offering faculty programs and seminars, thus in part retraining literature faculty for their new role. Ironically, because of the recent burgeoning interest in writing instruction as a legitimate field of study, many part-time instructors who are new graduates are often much better informed about writing theory and even trained in teaching writing. This disparity in training and interest can further strain the

relationship between regular faculty and the writing program in which they must participate.

In our interview protocols we included questions and probes to explore the role of the composition coordinator in dealing with "retraining" literature faculty. (We have already described composition coordinators' inability to exert as much control over regular faculty's classroom instruction as they do over part-timers' work.) We found composition coordinators either shoulder this retraining responsibility and generate suitable activities or they do not. Those that do, vary in the extent and success of their efforts and in the support they receive from other administrators. (Some of the retraining activities are directed toward filling the instructor pool for the upper-division writing requirement courses. That issue is not included in this section.)

Composition coordinators who take an active role in retraining faculty can be found leading programs E, Q(B), I, and J(B). The program E coordinator has developed and teaches a course on teaching writing. It is a graduate level course and faculty members must complete this course before they are allowed to teach composition. The Q(B) program also relies upon a course to retrain faculty. However, this is predominantly for non-English department faculty who are teaching in the Q(B) writing program located in a small interdisciplinary department. The I and J(B)

program coordinators are similar in their approach, which is considerably less formal than teaching courses. These program directors run loosely organized social gatherings in which composition is the formal topic for discussion. Some of the other composition coordinators interviewed also make opportunities to discuss composition "available," but the lack of sustained effort and success in drawing tenured faculty into these activities precludes our labeling these coordinators as effective leaders in faculty retraining. Compare the descriptions of effort and success on the part of the I and J(B) coordinators with those less successful efforts of the J(A) and S coordinators.

PROGRAM I

INT: Are you involved in any way in faculty retraining programs?

ENGL: We have an informal luncheon meeting called Comp. Meetings held perhaps once every six weeks in which we as a faculty are to read an article and discuss it. Or have an individual faculty member come and discuss an article on which he may be working, on composition--or which he has read and wishes to use as a focal point for an hour, an hour and a half discussion. In that sense, refining faculty understanding of the composition field.

INT: Are those well attended?

ENGL: I'd say we have perhaps eight to ten faculty. Often the people who attend the meeting and are most interested, are also, of course, those who know the most about it, and those who need it the most are nowhere to be seen.

INT: Are these eight to ten mostly part-timers?

ENGL: Half and half, I would say. ...They're really better attended at first and it really depends on how the person who's got the energy to do the paper work and recruiting--(the comp. and remedial coordinators).

PROGRAM J(B)

COMP #2

INT: What about faculty retraining? Do you get involved in that?

COMP #2: We have workshops in the writing committee occasionally where we decide to update each other on what we are doing, interesting things we have read. It is usually a Saturday workshop or something in someone's home. And it is casual and we have pie and coffee. But sometimes some very few good suggestions come out of that. Everyone brings his or her favorite essay or project or whatever. We exchange a lot of ideas.

. . . .

It would be very hard to structure them because all of this is taking place for free--on a Saturday or a Sunday. So quite often they are at my house and I provide a little dinner party or some hors d'oeuvres or something. How are you going to get people there otherwise? You can't pay them. You have no honorary liquor license. You have to have some sort of a carrot. And that is why they are so--

INT: Do they respond to this carrot?

COMP #2: Most of them show up.

PROGRAM J(A)

INT: Are there any structured occasions for full-time faculty and others to come together to share ideas on teaching?

COMP: Yes. We have occasionally had, and would like to have now, some kind of seminars or get-togethers...we will try to have one or two a semester. We don't always.

INT: What kind of response do you get from the faculty?

COMP: Not strong.

PROGRAM S

INT: And I take it you have the principal responsibility for faculty retraining?

COMP: That's right. ...We have had none of it go on so far. I set up a composition library in our staff room. ...There's been a low check out rate so far--but they are looking at the books. Some of them will just stand there and read something and put it back on the shelf.

INT: You've just been talking about this--structured occasions for full-time faculty and others to come together (grading sessions). And is it correct to say that what you've been saying is that the part-timers are very ready to do that and it's kind of tough to get the others to join?

COMP: That's pretty accurate. And the others, they take the time to say I'd really like to come to that and I can't. And I think part of it is that conflict in their souls between composition and literature. They say, 'Look, I'm going to give just so much time a week to composition. I believe in it--teaching is an important thing, but I'm not going to that discussion session. It's too much of my time.' So it's a really interesting paradox and yet the interest is there. Oh they'd love to know in two seconds what happened at that discussion session. But they don't want to take that hour and a half.

In sum, eight of the twelve composition coordinators in our interview sample are largely unable or unwilling to take active responsibility for the retraining or "development" of writing instructors within the department. Of those four who attempt to do so, only two clearly succeed. All of our interviewees describe the difficulties they encounter in

getting regular tenured and tenure-track English faculty to participate. This is despite the sense that these literature-trained instructors are the very ones most in need of "catching up" on the developments in writing theory. Those coordinators whose retraining efforts do look successful have used one of two approaches: (1) mandatory, enforced coursework before assignment to teach writing, or (2) socially contexted "meetings" for which composition topics and materials are prepared ahead.

3. Remedial Instruction: Procedures and Resources

Certain baseline features of all remedial programs in The California State University system should be considered when reviewing these data. A major concern for all campuses is the use of remedial augmentation funds which are made available through the system headquarters on the basis of the number of students who score at or below 150 on the EPT on each campus. (The EPT has a range of 120 to 160, standard deviation of 9; a score of 150 is approximately at the 50th percentile.) The formula which generates this funding is based upon a theoretic reduction in the student/faculty ratio in remedial classes from 18:1 to 12:1. In practice, however, the campuses have a great deal of leeway in the exact remediation schemes using these funds. This is at least partially a result of the fact that the central remedial

fund only takes care of, at most, half of the funding needs; the campuses must also use other course and administrative monies to establish remedial courses. The result is that the simplest solution to the remedial problem, namely tutorial adjuncts to freshman composition classes, is a part of many campus programs, but there are also substantial variations on the basic funding scheme.

Another consideration in most remedial programs is the use of reading classes for students at very low skill levels (EPT Reading sub-score less than 135). All the campuses interviewed had reading classes available or planned for implementation in the next academic year. Reading skills work is occasionally integrated into pre-remedial writing courses, but for the most part is separated from writing coursework, at least in the instructional sense.

The original intention of the faculty panel was to gather information on the mechanical details of remediation processes. Features such as sources and allocations of funds, hiring status of instructors, location of administrative responsibility for remedial programs, processes for diagnosing and placing remedial students, course sequencing, and enforcement of requirements, could all be reasonably associated with this category. Thus, a number of decisions were necessary to narrow the focus of the topic for this analysis. First and foremost, only the lower division remedial program is included. Some courses related to the

upper-division writing competency requirement for graduation might also be considered "remedial." The content of such courses, however, is collegiate in nature and is often so closely tied to the implementation of the requirement that the details of such remediation are better dealt with in the upper-division requirement category.

Other components of remedial procedures which are not included in this area are processes for diagnosing and placing remedial students and enforcement policies. (Both of these areas are in a separate category not included in this report: English Placement Test procedures and policies.) An additional area which has not been dealt with here is sources and allocations of funds.

There remain under our general heading three sources of variation: location of administrative responsibility for remedial programs, course sequencing, and hiring status of instructors. These sources of variation are labeled and described below.

a. Remedial Program Location. The first of three arrangements for remedial responsibility is basically a non-arrangement; i.e., the campus has no remedial coordinator and remedial coursework in writing is available outside the English department. Campus program F is the only member of this class. Primary arrangements for remediation are made through the Study Skills Center, which offers cataloged courses. Study Skills Center staff deal with remedial

composition instruction as a part of their broader responsibilities for assistance in a number of subject areas.

The second type of arrangement places the remedial program within the English department, but the department does not have a remedial chair. Responsibility for remediation usually lies with the composition chair. Five programs make use of this arrangement; they are E, J(B), Q(A), Q(B), and S.

The remaining six remedial programs in our sample are located within the English department, and the department has a remedial chair or coordinator who is responsible for program administration. In five of the programs in this class, the remedial coordinator is responsible for a subset of the overall English department curriculum. Programs C, D, G, H, I, and J(A) are all of this type. Program D is an extreme variation of this form. The English department has acquired and manages a large-scale learning center whose sole function is remediation in reading and composition skills. Within the English department both the director of this learning center and the remedial composition director are responsible for administration.

b. Course Sequencing. The course sequence available on some campuses to remedial students is quite detailed, offering a multiplicity of course objectives, remediation levels, and teaching techniques. After some consideration of the critical features of these programs, however, we settled upon four

broad classifications: (a) adjunct assistance only, (b) one remedial course, (c) pre-remedial and remedial coursework, and (d) pre-remedial coursework and remedial adjunct assistance.

Adjunct Assistance Only. One English department, F, program offers remedial instruction only through course adjunct assistance. In this case that consists solely of tutors attached to certain sections of the regular freshman composition course for students who possess skills at the upper levels of the remedial range. Otherwise students must initiate their own remediation in writing by seeking learning center assistance. Comments from a learning center staff member (LC STAFF) and from the English department chair illustrate the extent of remediation available from the English department.

PROGRAM F

> LC STAFF: Well, one of our budgetary items is, I forget whether it is $10,000 or $12,000 this year, I believe $12,000, is that we give over to the English department to supply them with tutors for some of their more remedial writing students. ...So there is a physical connection. Those are monies that come from the Chancellor's writing development funds which are apportioned through us. But we feel that they really belong to anybody in the university who is doing remedial writing instruction and even though the English department is technically not doing remedial writing instruction, we know they are.

> ENGL: Under these circumstances, we have developed a little scheme to help the students, our majors, who want to be teachers, to provide more contact hours for the students who are taking our comp. classes, and to enlarge the class sizes

in comp. (without jeopardizing the '25 or we all quit' stand of the comp. teacher)....

Each semester more and more teachers have opted for this, because the tutors are doing a good job. What the tutors are to do largely are pre-read papers, write these supportive remarks, and keep office hours where they talk with the students. Particularly those who are having trouble. We use some money that we get from the study skills center to bankroll this tutor program out of the Chancellor's special fund for remedial writing. Because the students who see the tutors, overwhelmingly remedial students, that gets them a little extra exposure.

One Remedial Course. Composition programs of this type provide remedial instruction through one departmental course. Four programs, G, H, Q(A), and Q(B), use this arrangement.

Program G's course has a common midterm for all sections, although scheduling problems have prevented the use of a common final. However, beyond the common midterm, decisions about remedial course content are left to the instructors. The following exchange occurred when the remedial chair was asked about the remedial program.

PROGRAM G

INT: ...What, in terms of the remedial program, what does the program consist of? Is it just English 100?

REML: That is all we have.

INT: So, no sequential courses.

REML: Well, English 100 [remedial] feeds into 101 [regular comp.]. And I try to emphasize to our part-timers that a passing grade in English 100 means that the student has a likelihood of completing English 101 with a C. That is the standard for the

> course. ...But there is no real program. We are just a bunch of people, teaching the same course, trying to get the students to the point where they can write well enough to survive in freshman composition.

Programs Q(A) and Q(B) also do not provide for much uniformity of course content among sections of the remedial course. Both programs use the same remedial course, which is run by staff from Q(A), the English department composition program. Tutors who are attached to the remedial course are trained in a common fashion, but guidelines are not provided to the instructors of the course, nor are common exams. The primary shared feature among sections of the remedial course in programs Q(A) and Q(B) is the skill level of students who are required to take the course. The remedial course in program H also lacks mechanisms for establishing and maintaining a standard course content.

Preremedial and Remedial Courses. On most campuses there exists the recognition that some students are so much in need of help that instruction in preremedial skills, such as grammar and reading, is necessary. On campuses E and S the English department remedial program provides that preremedial assistance through courses which teach reading and vocabulary skills in conjunction with fundamentals of sentence and paragraph construction. Students operating at a somewhat higher level can find help in a remedial course which concentrates on composition skills. For both programs, this course is staffed by tutors as well as regular course

instructors. At both levels of remedial instruction, course content is guided by written syllabuses and course descriptions. In addition, part-time faculty who teach these courses are products of the campus composition degree programs or have common, significant training in teaching writing. These programs are clearly well-coordinated between levels of instruction, in placement of students, and in instructional approach. Interestingly, both programs make extensive use of English Placement Test scores in assigning students to courses.

PROGRAM S

> COMP: The students are placed in the [English] 50s courses if their EPT total score is below 140. If their logic subscore is the lowest, they must begin in 51. If their reading subscore is lowest, they must begin in 52. And if their sentence construction subscore is the lowest, they must begin in 53.
>
> INT: And if they are all at the bottom?
>
> COMP: They begin in 51, and they must progress through the series sequentially to get to 100 [Remedial]. The only way they can jump a course out of sequence is with the instructor's approval. The faculty are delighted because for the first time in their lives the courses are fairly consistent. English 100 really contains people who need that instruction on that level. They don't have to hit a middle ground with a brilliant person sitting to their right and a dummy to their left.

Preremedial Courses and Remedial Adjunct. The remaining five (C, D, I, J(A), J(B)) of the twelve programs have some form of preremedial instruction also, even though they have

no remedial courses. Instead, regular remedial students are placed in freshman composition classes and given tutorial assistanc in class; the especially weak students are placed in preremedial classes. In general, the remedial coordinator has the most influence in the preremedial courses, although he or she may have hiring and/or training responsibilities for tutors working with sections of the freshman composition courses.

One obvious result is that preremedial content is more carefully defined than remedial by means of various techniques, including selection of common texts, use of common syllabuses, or administration of common finals. Formats for preremedial instruction vary from single writing courses to multi-course complexes which specialize in highly specific composition skills. Comments from two remedial program coordinators are typical of the degree of specificity in preremedial content, despite no remedial offering.

PROGRAM C

> REML: ...One other thing I forgot, we also have special comp. courses for students who score in the mid-range on the EPT who aren't low enough to be disastrous and to necessarily need work before they go into comp., although many of them do. We can't have a large remedial program, it's just too expensive. So this particular group of students gets placed in a special comp. course, taught by people who are specially concerned or interested or sympathetic to anxiety-ridden students and also we make the course no more than 20 in a course so they get more attention.

If they get a very low Reading score and I consider low somewhere around 133, 134, if that seems to be a serious problem there's an education course called "Efficient Reading" which I suggest they take. If they score very low in sentence construction they take the Sentence Construction course. If they score very low in logic I suggest that. However, if their scores are low but they do pretty well on the essay, if the essay is a 6 or a 7, I think twice about putting them into a really basic course....

INT: What if all scores are equally low?

REML: I try to get them into Reading, first of all. It seems to me they really need to work on their reading and try to learn some tricks for comprehending. Secondly, I put them into the Writing Workshop always if their scores are low, because that's a program which has all the writing accomplished in class and there are tutors there so they get immediate attention and they write a lot....

The 103 (Writing Workshop) course, since I generally set that one up, I tell everyone very specifically how it works and the other thing I do to keep a great deal of control on 103, is that I type up a schedule of assignments, exactly what's due on what day and what assignments will come in what week, I make sure that everything is ready for the TAs when they walk into class on the first morning, they know exactly what papers to hand out to students, what they're supposed to do that day, and I say if something works out in class, it just is too slow, you may skip an assignment, I let them think there's a little leeway, but finally, I make sure that all of the assignments come to this office and they are given to them. They are in a way advisory to the students but the assignments come from here.

PROGRAM J(A)

REML: ...When they take the English Placement Test, if their scores are such, 145 or below on the total score, and/or 135 and below on the Reading section, they cannot take freshman composition until they pass the 097 Reading course and/or the 098 Writing course. That is how we maintain a control.

> The "0" classes administer a common writing examination. Which is very reminiscent of the English Placement Test written sample. And that is scored holistically by all the remedial instructors and the tutors. The score, I think--this year the midterm score of 11 was required for the student to pass out. That meant one of us had to give it a six, which would be the highest score possible and another a five, at least...And at this point, the instructor would advise him either to take the regular freshman composition course or a course which we call restricted 155, which is our freshman composition course. The restricted 155 is for the student the instructor feels will not profit by another semester of 098, Basic Writing, but is perhaps not quite ready for the mainstream. And these restricted 155 courses carry regular composition credit but there is extra tutorial help and the instructors are specially chosen for their ability to work with that kind of student.

In sum, the twelve programs discussed here have arrived at four different approaches to the same problem of remedial writing instruction. Nevertheless, our remedial program coordinators demonstrate agreement that for lower levels of writing instruction, i.e., preremedial instruction, an effective program requires a good deal of centralized control and uniformity. The extent and level of structure in higher levels of remediation, however, seems to be a function of individual preferences, budget, and administrative viewpoints.

c. Remedial Instructors. As we progress through our analysis of the questionnaire and interview data, there is indication that the extent of tenure-track faculty involvement in the composition program may have an influence on the amount of control which a composition coordinator can exert over course subject matter and instructional techniques.

Our initial review of Fact Sheet and interview data in this area is restricted to courses which are strictly remedial; that is, freshman composition courses with remedial adjuncts as described in the previous section are excluded. We find only one program where more than 20 percent of the remedial sections are taught by tenure-track faculty. That program, I, reports tenure-track faculty teaching in 50 percent of its remedial sections. For all the other programs, there were either no tenure-track faculty involved in remedial instruction or the involvement was limited to a faculty member with some administrative responsibility for the program, e.g., the remedial coordinator. It appears that for remedial programs tenure-track participation is consistently low and has little explanatory power in accounting for variations in remedial programs.

4. The Upper-Division Writing Requirement: Procedures and Policies

The upper-division writing requirement was established systemwide in The California State University as a means of certifying competency in writing skills for graduates of the nineteen campuses. Although this is a graduation requirement, campuses have been strongly encouraged to certify students early in the junior year so that remedial recourse can be provided in a timely fashion to those who do not succeed in

fulfilling the requirement. Each campus has been requested to establish its own standards and methods for certification, as well as to provide funds for administration of tests and establishment of courses. This latitude has resulted in a number of approaches to the problem.

Our analysis of interviews suggests that three basic factors relate to the implementation of the upper-division writing requirement and differentiate the certification process on our ten-campus sample. These factors are (a) the certification method itself, (b) instruction and opportunity for remediation, and (c) campus commitment to the process.

a. The Certification Method. Three certification formats are used variously on the campuses interviewed. The first requires that students take an exam, usually developed on campus, which they must pass to be certified. The second format provides a choice between an exam and a course; the student chooses one. The third variety offers a required course as the sole means for students to fulfill the requirement.

Three campuses, H, I, and J, use a campuswide examination as the sole method for enforcing the requirement. All students at campus J (programs J(A) and J(B)) must take the same exam. Campus I also offers an essay exam; H offers an essay accompanied by objective test items covering grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph organization. In describing essay scoring criteria, J and I include language use, mechanics,

and organization. H does not, relying upon the objective test items for those criteria, emphasizing instead the completeness of the essay response to the given question.

Six of the ten sample campuses allow the student to satisfy the requirement by means of either a course or an examination. Although there is some variation in emphasis, programs C, E, F, G, Q, and S all allow the student to satisfy the requirement in this way. Program S is typical of this group, in terms of its procedures and staffing for the courses used for satisfying the requirement.

CAMPUS S

INT: As I understand it, students on this campus meet the requirement by taking a test or by taking a set of approved courses. That's right?

AVP: That's right.

INT: What happens to students who prove deficient?

AVP: If they prove deficient in examination, they can go take one of the courses. All of the courses, incidentally, are English courses. They have the option of approving other ones, but they have not yet done so.

INT: Are you generally in support of the policies that have been....

DEAN: Oh, yes. With one exception. I don't get enough staffing to staff the courses.

Program D is the only campus which provides a course as the sole mechanism for satisfying the upper-division writing requirement. The course is usually taken in a major department,

and has a campuswide common final. This is one of the two campuses in the system that developed a graduation or upper-division writing certification before the establishment of systemwide standards in 1979. This campus' implementation of the requirement is especially interesting because of the attempt to create and maintain a truly campuswide sense of responsibility for the upper-division writing requirement. (Below, UD COORD stands for upper-division writing requirement coordinator.)

CAMPUS D

DEAN: ...What I think is the keynote to our success, if we have any success, is that generalized exam, everybody takes, in all sections. No matter what department the course is taught in, they take the same final exam and all the teachers come together and grade it; ...it is campuswide. And you have to give credit to [AVP] and [Dean of Undergraduate Studies] for insisting on that type of structure. Otherwise it is the English department against everybody else. And I think the members of the committee, both the English Requirements Committee and the [General Education Committee] have made a real difference in getting the rest of the university to cooperate and to take it seriously.

INT: Do you think they are?

DEAN: Well, it's too early to tell what's going to happen, yes, I think they are taking it seriously.

UD COORD: I'm responsible for the upper division writing workshop. But only with regard to the [common] final exam.

INT: Not with regard to the 100 courses total?

UD COORD: No, I have no control over the courses.

INT: That remains the purview of the committee, then?

UD COORD: Not so much of the committee but of each department that elects to offer the 100 course.

INT: Who makes the decision about [course] standardization?

UD COORD: There really isn't [any]. What we're trying to do is to get a measure of standardization by backing it into the final exam. I'm trying to use that as a lever so that we can arrange to have some common core for all the courses. At this stage there is no core to the course.

INT: Do you have to write the exam?

UD COORD: Yes, I'm the chairman of an eight-person committee and we have struggled to find patterns [in writing topics] that we thought we could use and then from the patterns I've developed a number of different materials that correspond to the general pattern.

In the passages presented we have outlined a number of issues which arise as campus faculty and staff implement the upper-division writing requirement. For campuses using courses, staffing resources tend to be an issue. On every campus the location of responsibility for the requirement also is a matter of some discussion (we take this up later below). Finally, enforcement of the requirement can be a difficult administrative problem.

b. Opportunities for Upper-Division Writing Instruction. A critical feature of a graduation requirement such as the upper division writing requirement is the availability of some means for students who are deficient in the required

skills to make good that deficiency without serious disruption of their collegiate careers. Strong efforts have been made to encourage campuses to enforce the requirement early enough in students' careers for remediation to take place. The intention is not to prevent students from graduating but to ensure that graduates are competent writers.

Remedial recourse and instruction vary from campus to campus primarily in terms of the source and extent of help. The main categories of upper-division remedial opportunity are (1) on your own, (2) department course, and (3) non-department assistance.

On campuses I, and J, there is very minimal preparatory and remedial instruction for meeting the graduation requirement; procedures for securing assistance are often not well defined, leaving students to their own devices. Perhaps because of limited resources or uncertainties about administrative responsibility, these campuses do not provide coursework for upper-division students who fail to pass their writing exam requirement. The student must seek assistance, as available, from learning skill centers or tutorial centers. Campus F, through offering students a choice between exam or course, does not provide back-up instruction for students failing either. All three programs allow students to "try again" endlessly.

INT: Now, let's talk about the campuswide writing issues and begin with the graduation requirement. As I understand it, students on this campus meet the requirement by examination only.

AVP: Yes, that's true.

INT: What happens to students who prove deficient?

AVP: They are given counseling and advice as to opportunities on the campus which are primarily through the Learning Resource Center and they are told to be prepared to take the examination again.

INT: Has anyone failed yet?

AVP: Oh, yes, and we have given some preliminary tests and even in those preliminary tests there were people who failed but now that we're giving them for real, the people are failing, and I can't recall what the rate is, it's a fair number of failures. The number of students who are taking the test are not the number who should be taking the test.

INT: They're putting it off?

AVP: Yes.

INT: Is it safe to assume they can take the test as many times as they want or is there a limit?

AVP: As far as I know, the policy allows them to take the test as many times as they want but they must show some intervening activity.

INT: Tutoring or something in between?

AVP: Yes.

Four programs, C, E, H, and S, have established English department courses as a basic part of their upper-division requirement. In the case of program H, students must take

the exam, but the course is explicitly designed for students who fail the campus exam. The other three campuses have also integrated their remediation into the requirement; that is, a student may choose whether to take the exam or the course, but is required to take the course if he or she fails the exam. The following interview describes the procedures and processes at campus E.

CAMPUS E

INT: Has anyone ever flunked the test? By that I mean, just not able to graduate?

COMP: Oh, that aspect of the requirement is enforced. If a student--the requirement states that the students must take the exam in their junior year. If they fail it, take English 414.

What in fact goes on, is that students take it whenever they feel like or don't take it at all and just take 414. But when they--at the point of graduation, their records are checked for one or the other. Either having passed the exam or having passed 414. And if they have done neither, they don't graduate. They really don't. We've got a new monitoring process now. That is, any student who fails the exam is automatically enrolled in our equivalent of 414 repeatedly. He is just automatically enrolled the next semester.

Formal instruction tied to the upper-division writing requirement is available on a campuswide basis on only three campuses; in this group, the English department tends to act in an advisory or review capacity for courses which are run by faculty in other departments. Campuses D, G, and Q have distributed some of the coursework related to the upper-divison requirement to non-English departments. Of these, campus G

has not implemented its requirement; the program is still in the planning stages. Campus Q's program is of particular interest because of the "quality controls" behind the involvement of non-English faculty in upper-division writing requirement courses.

CAMPUS Q

INT: ...I think there are only 3 or 4 other departments besides English which have approved courses. I didn't ask him which they were, but I believe he mentioned Music as one.

AVP: History is one. They adapted rather substantially one of their courses to meet this requirement...there is one other, one of the areas of the sciences became one of these departments, I think Biological Sciences. There is some reflection here of what I think is one of the more positive developments, that is teaching of writing seminars to non-English department faculty. D_____ played a more than casual role in that since he taught the course and there was some funding provided 2 or 3 years ago and was, in my judgment, an enormously successful experiment and one that created small cadres of zealots around the campus. That is, faculty from other departments and I think there's some carryover there to departments that got interested in this area and not just to get more students for FTES (staffing allocations) purposes but for the challenge and some of these faculty, many of whom were senior faculty, took leadership in their departments. I know that's true of Biological Sciences and History because I can think of the people involved and I don't recall the others. That's an experiment we would like to replicate....

INT: Do you have cooperative essay reading in [English] 250?

ENGL: Yes, we do. That's the course that fulfills the literacy requirements so other departments that offer comparable courses all participate in the cooperative [common exam].

INT: You have one reading that includes the courses outside of English and the English course as well. Now this one essay does not determine whether the student fulfills the requirement?

ENGL: No, the cooperative essay is considered purely advisory. That means that the instructor may count it, as many do, as one paper. We would hope that the instructor would take that rather seriously so that if the student has done poorly all through the course and then does very well on that and earns a rather high grade that the instructor might possibly look at some of the papers to see if maybe he has been overly hard on something that is not a great problem rhetorically.

The availability of instruction as preparation or remediation for students fulfilling the upper-division writing requirement appears to vary widely among campuses. We find that even in a situation where resources are scarce, some campuses find ways to certify students, ways which also enhance campuswide visibility for writing skills courses and educate faculty about methods for alleviating writing skills problems.

c. Levels of Campus Commitment. To a great extent, the interview passages which have been presented as part of the review of the upper-division requirement have revealed the level of campus commitment as well. Depending on who is committed and to what extent, the writing requirement can be an enriching and creative experience or a genuine bother. Our analysis of this issue reveals four variations.

At one level of ambition and commitment we find two campuses which are attempting to establish a firm base of campuswide participation with English department standards

of quality. Campuses D and Q both try to do this. We find their success seems to result from a history of inter-departmental cooperation, administrator support, and English department persistence.

CAMPUS D

INT: Are there any other kinds of mechanisms for bringing the faculty together regarding unity issues?

AVP: By bringing together you mean so that all participate in some way? The only one I know of is our upper-division writing workshop.

Every student must take an upper division course in writing. Every department must either offer such a course or designate such a course in some other department, for example, in Journalism. Journalism could offer a course in news writing that would qualify for the upper-division writing requirement.

Or the engineers could offer a course in scientific writing, or technical writing. The theory here is that in the first two years, through 1-A, 1-B and other experience, students ought to by then have mastered most of the detail of writing. Now we want to get them to use those skills in a more direct and more pertinent and specialized way.

INT: Once they take a course, say, in Engineering Report Writing, are they then prepared to take that common final?

AVP: They'd better be. My plan is to monitor those things, we're fairly new at this, if students from a given department aren't doing well in that common final then the assumption is there's nothing wrong with the students; something's wrong with what's going on in that department workshop, and we'd better look at it.

A second variation on the theme of commitment to the upper-division requirement is represented by campuses F, G, and J, where negotiations are still being conducted concerning responsibility on campus for the requirement. Interviews from these campuses are characterized by considerable freedom afforded to non-English departments in selecting courses and defining course content for meeting the requirement. Not surprisingly, this frequently results in campuswide deference to and reliance upon the English department.

CAMPUS G

INT: Your decision-making process. Let's start with the campus-wide writing policy like the upper-division writing requirement. Consider how you handle it on this campus. Your requirements state that your people can take either an exam or a course.

COMP: They can either take the exam or a course. The courses are going to be English A, Humanities B, Social Science C, Administration A and Natural Science A. The instructors from those ideally would come from the faculty of those schools.

We may end up instead hiring part-timers trained in teaching Social Science who have a writing background, or writing teachers who are willing to acquaint themselves with Social Science, or who have some background in the area.

INT: And who set this policy that the requirement would be fulfilled by a course and exam?

COMP: The college-wide committee on writing proficiency.

INT: Can you think of any other decisions affecting the comp. program that involve people outside the department?

COMP: No. I predict a drastic change in the comp. director's role as kind of the shepherd. And the shepherd of some rather unwilling sheep in some cases. And trying to get the people trained - to get good part-timers for these folks [i.e., in other departments]. Or getting the people retrained. Its going to be a horrible task. The composition coordinator now [has it] quite easy because it is all English department. The coordination is going to be very difficult, time-consuming, not nearly as amiably completed as they [try to] get people [requiring] 6 papers minimum, or just getting someone [in other departments] to teach it in the first place.

CAMPUS F

INT: Getting back to the ways of satisfying the upper-division writing proficiency requirement, you said it was schools in the arts and sciences where courses are available outside of English in writing to satisfy that. Would that be a dozen or so courses?

ENGL: A dozen is about how many. Next week the department will print out a report on the response of the university towards the requirement. It is [described] in the catalog, department by department. But there is no way, the role the English department is supposed to play in it, there is no way that we can play that role.

INT: Those three or five [English] courses you spoke of, did that immediately blossom forth in many sections to meet the need?

ENGL: No. I've offered only one section of it. And I plan to offer never more than one section unless resources come from somewhere else. Even when you discount those students who have cleared their requirement by examination, we'll still have an enormous population of students who will be needing such a class. I would guess that over half the departments in the university are using that [English] class as a means of satisfying the requirement. That came as a surprise to us in the summer. I was not a member of the university writing committee, and did not want to be. The department's position was that this is a university-wide problem which at that level should be dealt

with by the entire university. We had one English department member as a part of the committee, but that person kept a rather low profile. And that was just exactly what we wanted.

For three other campuses, E, H, and S, the basic commitment to the upper-division writing requirement comes from the English department. This commitment is an exclusive one in that department leaders feel the requirement is within their province, and they intend to see it is properly established and maintained. It may not be a coincidence that on two campuses, E and S, the English department composition coordinator is a strong, dynamic individual (see earlier sections on composition coordinators). Even the campus H English chair, quoted below, makes it clear that the English department intends to control the significant decisions and operations for the campus upper-division writing requirement.

CAMPUS H

ENGL: I persuaded the academic vice president to shift the responsibility to Arts and Sciences, I work very well with the dean there and he would give us the kind of support we needed.

INT: You say the committee will be appointed?

ENGL: The dean is going to appoint the committee. He's waiting for the writing proficiency coordinator and me to come over with a list of the members for him.

INT: And who do you imagine will be on it?

ENGL: I suspect it will include most of the people we've retrained. People who know something about composition. We'll probably pick some from other departments, too, but there are a couple of

guys in the School of Education who grade for us on our writing proficiency exam. We'll pick one of them, we'll pick somebody from Engineering.

INT: What will that committee do?

ENGL: They will be advisory essentially. The writing proficiency coordinator will be the non-voting chair of the committee and that's the way she wants it.

INT: Will they be dealing with nuts and bolts?

ENGL: No, this will be the policy committee but policy is already pretty well established, the main role is when we come up with one of those awful situations like we have this summer where we have somebody with a genuine appeal on the grounds of some learning disability, a person who simply can't take an exam in a two-hour period and complete it, or something like that, what do you do with that person? Somebody ought to have the authority to give some kind of special consideration.

The final category of campus commitment is also one in which the English department takes primary responsibility for the upper-division writing requirement. However, it does so reluctantly, with little support from the campus as a whole, and with a lot of concern for the burden of the administrative responsibility. We find the two polytechnic campuses, C and I, belong in this category. Passages below demonstrate these feelings.

CAMPUS C

INT: Let's begin with the campuswide issue as an example, the upper-division writing requirement for graduation, do you require an exam or a course?

AVP: There are really 3 options. The student may enroll in a composition course, or may enroll in selected literature courses that have heavy

writing components, or may take the exam. And the literature courses with the writing component we did some revision on those so that we're comfortable with that writing component.

INT: You require an exam or a course on this campus, is that right?

COMP: Right.

INT: Who set that policy? Where did that come from?

COMP: Essentially out of the department.

INT: So it was not a campuswide committee?

COMP: Check with [name], I think the idea originated here, it may have had to clear a campus-wide committee. It was thrown on our laps as I remember.

CAMPUS I

ENGL: Oh, well, we--from the very start of the graduation writing competency requirement, I did not want us, meaning the English department, to play a major role, I wanted responsibility to be on faculty all over the campus.

So we really kept a very low profile in it. ...I'd like other departments at the university to take more responsibility for writing achievement. In fact, right now, I see us entering in the near term a real crunch in demands for our composition courses by more departments, demands which we have refused. We've begun to refuse requests by other departments for adding new composition courses just like [English] 104 for their majors. We just can't handle it. I suggest to them that they should begin their own writing courses, [though] I know the potential dangers.

A review of the interview transcripts shows a wealth of data concerning approaches to the implementation of a writing skills graduation requirement. Only a fraction of these

data have been dealt with here, and only for certain critical elements of the upper-division requirement. Substantial variation is evident for the three categories of data which we consider critical. Our best current information suggests that the extent of commitment to the writing requirement has had and will have a major impact on the structure and implementation of this requirement on the campuses.

5. Non-English Department Composition Activities

The most frequently used coding category in interview analysis was that for non-English department writing activities. Into this category we coded references to learning center programs in writing, organized tutorial support, specially funded writing skills programs, and other departments' writing instruction (exclusive of upper-division requirement courses). To qualify as an adjunct source of instruction for our coding purposes, the assistance had to be talked about as reliabily available, organized (operating as a unit, under a leader), systematic (planned and predictable), and focused upon writing instruction (not reading, library help, ESL, or study skills).

We are interested in this topic area for three reasons. First, we wonder to what extent supplemental writing instruction is controlled by the English department, and whether that instruction occurs in classes or outside, e.g., in

tutoring centers. Second, we wonder how well different instructional organizations communicate with each other, coordinate their efforts, and/or share resources and responsibilites. Third, we wonder about the quality and utility of outside assistance in writing.

As we discussed our notes and reviewed sections from interviews, we felt a need to simplify a complex of features describing available services. We initially proposed five categories under our descriptor, "adjunct services in writing": (1) variety in outside services, (2) instructional content and format, (3) staffing, (4) funding, and (5) articulation between and among services and the English department. Unfortunately, describing campus program patterns in discrete categories generates more confusion than it resolves. Therefore, our organizational approach is more holistic, grouping campus programs across the five categories according to method of delivery.

There are three basic methods of outside service. First, on several campuses, the English departments have no direct responsibility for offering regular remedial courses. As a result, laboratory or study skills center offer programmatic remedial instruction through courses and tutors. In a second arrangement outside services specifically support the English department special programs, where weak students placed in regular composition classes receive tutorial assistance. The adjunct agency trains and monitors these

tutors, and often tutorial work takes place in the agency's center or lab. The third alternative consists of outside services that make limited writing instruction available, along with other subject matter assistance, on a walk-in or teacher-referral basis. Combinations of these offerings exist on our ten-campus sample.

a. Courses and Tutors. On two campuses (D and F), the English departments do not provide regular courses to remedial students. Instead, these students are sent to a laboratory or center. On campus D, this service is still under the auspices of the English department; on campus F, the study skills department runs the lab. Both of these operations offer residence credit, but not graduation units, for their remedial writing courses.

Campus F's study skills center offers two courses, one referred to as "developmental writing," the other, at a still more basic level, as "pre-remedial." These represent the only remediation available to students who fail to qualify for the freshman composition course offered in the English department. The study skills director and writing specialist have developed a remedial program of instruction. Goals (student performance criteria), standards, curricula, and specific instructional methods exist for these courses. Part-time instructors are selected for their ability to teach writing; they are monitored and regularly evaluated.

In addition to providing remedial coursework, the study skills center provides tutors to the English department, where they are used extensively in freshman composition classes, especially classes taught by full-time tenured faculty. The department chair, composition coordinator, and academic vice president, remark on the reluctance of reg lar English faculty to accept responsibility for writing instruction, relying instead upon the study skills department's writing center for remedial writing instruction for the campus.

PROGRAM F

INT: On the matter of where policy comes from, what do you see as the role of the Fnglish department in composition program policy making?

AVP: The role of the English department ought to be the expert source for any policies that are adopted by the campus. I think it has not played that role very well in the past here, but I think it is likely to in the future to play a larger and more important part. Like many English departments until recently - and I mean very recently - the English department regarded their basic composition courses as courses which were as much literature as they were writing. That's changed. Now everybody, as I understand it from [name], has to agree that they will be teaching composition, not literature.

I don't know if you've talked to [name], or not, they've hired a few [composition] people... so they are thinking about that much more seriously and constructively than they were for a long time. So I think that the role that they advocated, essentially, in writing...well the reason the Study Skills Center exists is because the English department wasn't providing any opportunity for remedial work and wasn't interested in doing so.

INT: You described earlier the position of the department with regard to composition. The fact that they were not trained or have any special knowledge in it? Has the feeling and the level of understanding changed?

ENGL: A little. [It's a] Slow sort of thing. The most hopeful sign that there'll be a little more sophistication in matters in comp. is that our regular faculty will be using more and more tutors.

. . . .

We use some money that we get from the study skills center to bankroll this tutor program out of the Chancellor's special fund for remedial writing. Because the students who see the tutors overwhelmingly, remedial students, they get them a little extra exposure.

The [English] faculty is willing to do this because it does cut down the number of hours they need to see students in their office. They can schedule the tutor on the basis of how large the class is.

On Campus D, remedial work also takes place in a laboratory setting. However, this writing lab operates as part of the English department, the lab director also serving as remedial program coordinator. Two remedial courses are offered in the lab. The "pre-remedial," two-unit course is intensive, individualized, lab work; in the three-unit remedial course students mainly work in a class setting with lab support. The courses have clearly articulated curricula and common final exams; the instructional staff are carefully trained and evaluated.

In addition to the structured remedial coursework, the writing lab offers tutor assistants for the English department composition classes and for individual students who come to

the lab for help. These functions seem comparable to those of the campus E skills center. However, there is an important contextual distinction between these two labs. Unlike the campus F English faculty, the campus D faculty seem more enthusiastic and knowledgeable about writing instruction. They view the lab tutoring services as a support for their own work, not as a means to increase class size, decrease office hours, and counterbalance the effects of reluctant full-timers. In fact, the lab efforts are well integrated with those of the overall writing program, including the upper-division writing requirement.

PROGRAM D

COMP: The lab is a crucial part of the lower division program, fundamental to 1-A, one of the stronger parts of our whole program, that's [remedial coordinator's] province.

INT: He and I are going to meet this afternoon and go over it very carefully.

REML: It's part of our whole way of working that the writing lab is totally integrated with the classroom thing and there's very close liaison all the time and I don't want those things separated at all, I want everything to blend together. Many of the remedial course teachers bring their classes to the writing lab and work with them there and we have very good relationships.

INT: Are there any people from the English department involved in the program in addition to you and [name]?

REML: Well, everybody knows about it. One important part of our program is the liaison system. Every faculty member who has a composition student has a tutor that reports to him once a

week. And that tutor brings in all the cards that have the test results. And at the same time the accumulated weekly roster of student visits and tests taken and passed.

So every week, every composition teacher, with students in the lab, 2L3, or 1A or 1B, gets a weekly report showing how many lab visits their students have made, what tests they have taken and the results of the test. And if they failed, why they failed. Every week they get this report. A tutor comes in and has a conference. They talk about problem students and why so and so is not getting there and that kind of thing. There is a constant reminder of everything that is happening.

INT: And the upper-division writing requirement has had even more influence, hasn't it?

REML: No, not yet. I foresee that a large number of lab people will come in. We are getting some support from the AVP's office to give writing help to the 100W [upper-division writing requirement]. We were so busy converting to the new remedial program that I did not stress it. But it will be a bigger and bigger thing from now on. We have got to help them. They are not going to be able to graduate from this place unless they get through the writing workshop.

b. Specially Funded Writing Programs. Special programs operate from outside funds allocated specifically for writing instruction for individuals or small groups. However well organized and useful, these services are not alternatives to regular English department courses, nor are they regular full-term classes taught by academic track staff. Instead, they are specially funded and usually employ a "writing specialist" who coordinates paid tutors. We see a distinction between this type of writing instruction program and that offered by learning centers and Educational Opportunity

Programs where writing is one small part of a multiple-subject assistance program. In the latter case, writing assistance is provided for students who have particular problems; in the former, regular curricular sequences, or units of work, in writing await the student. Two campuses in our interview sample currently have specially funded writing programs.

On campus G, the program receives federal funds under a grant to improve student skills. While the program is not necessarily restricted to writing skills, it has deliberately developed, as a major emphasis, a writing skills program of instruction coordinated by a writing specialist. The specialist also teaches part time in the English department. While that provides an opportunity for the articulation of the program work with course work, the English department does not have any control over the administration or resources of the special program.

The instructional organization of the program is based upon the workshop format. Students' problems are diagnosed and individualized programs of remediation are suggested. The instructional staff consists of paid "tutors" who are graduate students in English. They are trained before they are allowed to lead workshops, and their work is monitored.

Another striking feature of the special program's operation is the extent of communication and cooperation between its staff and the staffs of the learning center, the EOP department, the English department, and other departments.

This is evident in attempts to avoid duplication of effort and to send students to the agency best suited to their needs. (Below the writing specialist is designated "WTG SPEC.")

PROGRAM G

INT: Do you structure any of your workshops around any of the [English department] courses specifically? Like do you have workshops for just the E100 people? And workshops for the E101 people? [Note: E100 is the English remedial course, E101 is freshman comp.].

WTG SPEC: No. The workshops...let me give you a copy of the schedule.

INT: I'd love that. Oh, they are skills mainly.

WTG SPEC: Sure. We talked about what kinds of things we could do given the fact that our audience might be transitory. It is idealistic at best to assume you could do anything to improve someone's writing in ten weeks--40 hours. We have even less time than that. And it is a sort of a catch as catch can situation.

And so we thought that maybe the students might feel like they had more control over their writing if we presented small segments. To say, here are some things, [for example,] and there really are ways of controlling them. Commas don't get put in by the one, two, three comma, one, two, three comma rule. There really are reasons why you put them wherever you put them.

And so we picked specific topics; things that we could talk about in one hour and give the students some kind of notion of what to do with. And then move on to something else. And a person could come to one of the labs and benefit, we feel. Or come to all eight and it would still help.

INT: So you could call these labs, not workshops.

WTG SPEC: Yes. And the format is that there is, depending upon the topics, about a half hour of lecture/discussion. And then some actual writing.

INT: There is the learning resource center, the EOP program and you as support services, as I understand it, is that right?

WTG SPEC: Yes.

INT: Do you feel that you work cooperatively with them and well and you are in good communication?

WTG SPEC: Yes...for the purpose of writing remediation we have divided our efforts in half. The learning center is responsible for subject-specific writing problems; if a student is writing a paper for a history class and has questions or does not quite understand what is going on, that person will go to the learning center. Students who have ongoing basic writing difficulties go through [this program] and ultimately through me.

This year, all of us are working much more closely now. And that is an exciting thing. It has meant that all of us had had to give up a little bit of flexibility. And, of course, it is always a little painful to do that but that transition is being made with incredible ease.

INT: And you all seem to know what the other one is doing. I know it is a small campus, but that is still an incredible accomplishment for even a small campus.

WTG SPEC: The acting dean has worked really hard to make that happen. The English department chairman has also been extremely cooperative.

On campus H the special program is a tutoring center which is run by the remedial English coordinator. Although this arrangement appears, at first, similar to the campus D writing lab, it differs in an important way. The tutoring center does not offer regular writing coursework. Its domain is exclusively tutoring assistance. This service is

available to any student by faculty referral or on a "walk-in" basis. A major role for the center is providing tutoring support for the remedial course offered by the English department.

PROGRAM H

> REML: The teachers in the remedial courses are informed that if we have sufficient tutors they may use tutorial time in the classroom. But this year, no one has chosen to incorporate it as a part of the classroom activity.
>
> But the students in the English 1 [remedial] classes use the tutoring center a great deal. They use it by referral or by their own realization that they need the help. We serve a good number of English students.
>
> INT: But it is voluntary, I take it.
>
> REML: Well, it depends. The teachers may require it of the students. And if they do, we keep records. The teachers do come down and check to see if the students are using it. But again, it depends on the individual teacher or instructor.

c. Limited Assistance. Every campus in our sample has an EOP department offering academic assistance to students admitted under the Educational Opportunity Program.[1] The generic "learning center" is also omnipresent in this sample. Like EOP departments, learning centers offer academic assistance

[1] These students do not meet regular admissions criteria and therefore are considered "disadvantaged." While these students are usually ethnic minorities, disadvantaged Anglos may be EOP students as well.

in a variety of subject areas. Unlike EOP, learning centers serve all students, usually as those students seek assistance, although sometimes by faculty referral. These agencies often offer tutoring help for writing problems that the student raises or the tutor diagnoses in writing done for or given as a course assignment.

Some campuses in our sample rely exclusively upon these services to supply out-of-class assistance in writing skills. These campuses are C, E, I, J, Q, and S. For some campuses this means there is only a limited amount of outside writing help available for students. For other campuses, these agencies have worked to fill a perceived need and have developed more sophisticated assistance.

On campuses C, I, and S, outside help in writing is not extensive. Two of these campuses, C and I, are polytechnic universities and their learning centers are less concerned with providing writing and reading assistance than assistance in mathematics and the sciences. Their students who need writing assistance often receive better service in the English remedial courses or from EOP tutors. Campus S presents a unique case. The remedial/composition coordinator was originally hired to develop and manage a writing program in the learning center, which she did. When she moved to the English department, she took with her the responsibility and authority for the remedial courses and tutoring assistance program. Her position is still funded through learning

center resources, and there is some concern on the part of the learning center staff about the loss of their writing program to the English department.

The learning center director on campus J also describes the loss of some writing assistance responsibilities, in this case to the Chicano Studies and the Pan-African Studies departments, which have each created their own complete writing programs. (See the section on Composition Programs for a description of these programs, identified as J(B).) In response, the campus J learning center has carved out a new writing domain for itself, the upper-division writing requirement. (Below "LC DIR" stands for learning center director.)

PROGRAM J

LC DIR: See now in terms of writing programs we not only have drop-in service...but we have huge program workshops and materials for students who have to take the [upper-division] writing proficiency exam.

INT: Yes, that is what I was going to say on the upper-division writing requirement for graduation, how has it affected your program?

LC DIR: Well, I felt like the writing proficiency exam is an occasion to create a...writing [program] that is designed to both prepare students to take it and offer short courses for a certain group of students who fail, mainly for students who fail the exam.

My reason was that the Center could play a very significant role for a number who simply need a basic refresher of composition skills to pass the test. We can offer very inexpensive prep-sessions and also we have developed a short course for students who fail.

INT: You started a minute ago to ask whether you should describe the prep-session. Could you do it very briefly?

LC DIR: Let me just lay out what it is briefly. We also have developed independently a two-hour audio cassette workbook, How to Take A Writing Proficiency Exam, which is experience-based because we use a whole past exam question and we take students through step by step, with basic issues such as read the question carefully, and we use examples from past exams where students have done well. All the illustrations are based on actual student performance. So the student who wants to prepare can come in any time the center is open and sit down with a cassette and listen to a combination lecture-exercise and with a culminating writing exercise.

Despite the more restricted offerings of these learning centers, many of the same campuses have EOP services that appear fairly well developed in the area of writing skills. Of course, these programs are not (at least in theory) open to all students. For many EOP programs, involvement in writing instruction began with an active role in the development of a remedial writing program. Historically, EOP students have been seen as those "most in need of assistance," and the EOP department has had money to provide that assistance. In most of our EOP and learning center interviews, people mention that the learning center grew out of an EOP-funded operation. On many campuses the learning center still shares EOP facilities or funds (though technically this is an inappropriate use of money targeted for EOP students only). Campuses that still have active EOP writing instruction are G and Q.

PROGRAM G

EOP: Our approach here for the last seven or eight years has been heavy emphasis on writing for all of our students. And the English 100 class, which is our intensive English, was a few years back, kind of jointly initiated by EOP and the English department.

Before that was a campuswide, so to speak, course. I mean it has always been campuswide in terms of enrollment, but up until five years ago, it was about 90% EOP students involved in that course. So we used to have only one or two sections a quarter. And that was the format.

Then as EPT [systemwide placement test] became a factor in identifying students, then the class naturally expanded and more sections were offered. And consequently the number of EOP students in a class proportionately decreased, which is what we really wanted.

Again, our philosophy has been that our students should be involved with courses that are [already in the] curriculum rather than developing separate courses that don't benefit the students. So that has been our purpose. From that standpoint, we have always had a writing component that we require our students to participate in, before English was a requirement.

These active EOP writing programs, G and Q, offer structured instructional classes in writing as well as the more common tutorial assistance. These programs appear carefully planned; instructors have writing backgrounds; tutors receive training. Students are diagnosed for placement into the most directly applicable instructional component. Also characteristic of these programs is the effort to follow up students and to maintain an active, open communications line with the English department.

PROGRAM Q

EOP: I teach an Independent Study for the English department in Afro-American Lit. My concentration is in the Harlem Renaissance Period in Afro-American Lit. I've taught Independent Studies in Harlem Renaissance, and in the summer, for five years, I've developed a six-week writing workshop for EOP admits. It's basically a writing course that bridges them into English 100. I teach that every summer. During the year I do Independent Studies.

Another member of our staff, one of our counselors, also has a degree in English and he and I separately read the [diagnostic] writing sample and make a determination of what areas they need to work on.

...the writing workshop is non-credit even though the new 009 [remedial] they've developed in the English department is very similar in some ways to what I've been doing for seven years.

6. Afterword

The interview process has provided the project with a considerable amount of information about attitudes, policies, problems, and rationales affecting college writing instruction. For this report we have been able to meaningfully analyze only five major categories of that information: (1) program goals and instruction philosophies, (2) composition coordinators' responsibilities, (3) remedial procedures and practices, (4) the upper-division writing requirement, and (5) non-English department activities. As the research continues, we will

return to this source for additional information, categories, and explanations of findings. If necessary or appropriate, we may return to campuses, or interview other campuses as time and resources permit.

CHAPTER NINE

Results of the Preliminary Analysis of the Faculty Survey

Overview

Below we present a descriptive summary and the results of factor analyses of key data from the questionnaires sent to writing instructors on all nineteen campuses. The faculty questionnaire, which can be found in the appendices volume, was designed to provide information on four issues: (1) faculty background; (2) faculty attitudes and beliefs about writing intruction, remedial students, composition program leadership, and campus climate surrounding writing program efforts; (3) classroom practice; and (4) influences on writing program operations. Results are presented for each of these topics.

The sample of respondents is described in Chapter Five of this report. However, one essential fact about this sample should be repeated here, since it needs to be kept in mind in relation to results. Although our respondents are all writing instructors, they differ in the kind and frequency of writing classes they teach. In general, we do not feel these differences jeopardize the interpretation of answers to questions on campus, department, and program affairs. However, we did ask our respondents to limit their answers

in the section on instruction to reflect their practices in only one course type, the class they most recently or most frequently taught. We offered three categories of writing classes and required the respondents to check the box indicating the referent for their answers. The categories are: (1) remedial writing instruction; (2) first-term freshman composition; and (3) another lower division writing course. Of the 371 complete cases, 17.7% (N=74) chose to answer based on their remedial course instruction; 55.7% (N=233) selected first-term freshman composition; and 15.3% (N=64) indicated that their responses reflected instruction in other lower division writing courses. The balance of respondents, 11.3% (N=47), neglected to indicate their referent. The distinction between remedial and first-term composition referents has been maintained in data analysis and presentation of results for items on instructional practices only.

1. Faculty Background: Who Teaches Writing?

We asked our sample several questions about their background: age, highest degree held, degree major, faculty status, years teaching writing, years on the campus. (Tables 13a-d present these data.)

Of the six age categories we offered, the 40-49 years old bracket obtained the most responses (33.7% or 137 respondents). Next most commonly selected was the 30-39 bracket (29.0%). The fact that 69.0% of respondents were at

or below age 49 may reflect the extensive use of part-time and full-time contract lecturers (often recent graduates still seeking permanent positions).

We also provided categories for describing the highest degree held by instructors in our sample. Not surprisingly, most people report completion of the Ph.D. (59.8%); the remaining 39.8% of our respondents are below the doctoral level. B.A., B.S., accounts for 8.3% of the sample; M.A., M.S., M.F.A., accounts for 27.5%. Another 3.7% claims the ABD, "all but dissertation," category.

Asked about the major field of study for those degrees, our sample indicates an overwhelming proportion (70%) from American or English literature. The remaining responses are distributed among linguistics, composition, education, and rhetoric (in descending order of popularity). Our "other" category accumulated 14.7% of the responses; these include seemingly unrelated subjects such as history, sociology, and counseling.

Our interest in faculty background reflects some expectation that writing courses might be primarily the domain of contract instructors, i.e., non-tenure track staff working on a part- or full-time basis. Of those writing instructors responding, we do find 58.5% are tenured or tenure-track faculty members, i.e., only slightly more than half. Contract lecturers (non-tenure track) account for 35.7% of the sample, graduate student assistants, 5.4%, and administrative track, .5%.

TABLES 13a-e

a. age on last birthday

age group	% of respondents
23 - 29	6.4%
30 - 39	29.0%
40 - 49	33.7%
50 - 59	21.4%
60 - 69	9.6%
N of cases	407

b. courses taught over the last three years

course	% of respondents*
remedial writing	41.0%
freshman composition - 1st semester	73.5%
freshman composition - 2nd semester	35.7%
other, lower division writing	23.6%
upper division writing requirement for graduation	50.4%
teacher education, teacher preparation in writing instruction	14.5%
special support services in writing	14.2%
N of cases	415

*multiple responses were permitted; therefore total percent exceeds 100%.

Tables 13a-e (continued)

c. highest degree status

degree	% of respondents
BA, BS	8.3%
MA, MS, MFA	27.5%
ABD, PhC	3.7%
PhD	59.8%
EdD	.7%
N of cases	408

d. field of specialization for this degree

major	% of respondents
literature	70.4%
rhetoric	1.7%
linguistics	5.6%
composition	4.7%
education	2.9%
other	14.7%
N of cases	408

e. current status on campus

status	% of respondents
tenured	56.5%
tenure-track	2.0%
full-time, lecturer (non-tenure-track)	5.1%
part-time, lecturer	30.6%
graduate assistant	5.4%
administrative track	.5%
N of cases	409

Our survey also asks the number of years teaching writing, and the number of years on campus. For "years teaching writing," faculty responses range from one to forty years. The mean is 13.3 years and the standard deviation, 9.4 (variance = 88.5). The distribution, clearly, is skewed toward the lower end of the range; fully 67% of the sample reports having taught writing sixteen or fewer years. For "years on this campus," the responses range from one to thirty-one years. The sample mean is 10.6, standard deviation, 7.5 (variance = 56.8). The distribution suggests a bimodal sample, with one group clustered around three or fewer years and a second group clustered around twelve to fifteen years. This may again reflect the dual status groups, regular tenured and tenure-track faculty and the newer "contract" or non-tenure-track instructors.

2. Faculty Attitudes and Beliefs

The data reported in this section are from the thirty-one Likert items on the questionnaire. In analyzing the sample responses, we began with an overview of answers across all respondents, then broke down data by campus and then by faculty status, i.e., regular faculty and contract lecturers. We did not find any clear distinctions between status categories for the attitudes/beliefs Likert items. On the other hand, program by program differences looked promising. However, the small number of respondents on many of the already small-sized campuses prevented us from conducting analysis

of variance tests of these differences. Furthermore, we did not wish to evaluate and compare nineteen individual campuses, but rather describe types of composition programs (presumably less than nineteen versions). We will return to these items for re-analysis by program features after we have identified program types. Campus by campus summaries of responses on these Likert items are tabled in the companion volume of appendices to this report.

Factor analyses which make use of these responses are included later in this chapter and discussed below. Among the issues we are interested in are the attitudes of the two status categories of faculty toward such matters as the teaching of writing, the level of staff morale, the need for a remedial program, and the existing campus writing policies. The factor analyses show that faculty perceptions on these matters form coherent and identifiable groupings.

3. Classroom Practice.

In interviews of writing program directors, we specifically asked about program policies regarding instructional goals and practices. While such policies were often articulated by interviewees, these same people were often obliged to point out that they had little or no idea of how closely most faculty adhered to policy; program directors agreed that their knowledge of classroom practice of regular staff (tenured or tenure-track) in particular was guesswork at best. In contrast, part-time and full-time lecturers teaching

writing were often more closely monitored and sometimes even "trained" by composition program directors.

In order to describe writing programs of instruction we felt it necessary to query the instructors directly about their personal approach to teaching. By gathering data at this level we expected to determine the commonalities and variations in practice between instructor types (contract and regular faculty), between course types (remedial and freshman composition), and among campus programs.

To describe writing instruction, we included survey items on actual practices and goals. We asked about the themes underlying the organization and sequence of instruction, materials used in support of those themes, methods of teaching, activities occurring during class, amount and kind of assignments, and feedback on assignments.

In addition, we felt that a clear picture of writing instruction required information about tangentially related activities, i.e., out-of-class activities carried out as part of a writing class. Accordingly, we asked faculty about outside work required of their students, length of office hours, referral of students to adjunct support services in writing (such as writing lab or tutoring center), and satisfaction with those services.

The data on instructional practices in the classroom were examined first by correlational analyses in an effort to reconstruct an entire instructional approach from the

several instructional categories we had created (goals, materials, methods, activities, assignments, feedback). These correlation matrices suggest to us that a factor analysis might prove fruitful. The methodology and the results of our factor analyses are presented in the following section.

First we present data on the variables less directly related to class instruction. For the most part, these items do not yield between-campus differences. Therefore, except where relevant, we summarize results across the entire sample rather than by individual campuses.

a. Outside Work. To determine out-of-class work that instructors require of their students, we offered a list of possibilities: (1) seek tutorial assistance; (2) seek computer-assisted instructional support; and (3) meet with the instructor. Further, we qualified those choices by asking if they are required of all or some students. Of our respondents (N=418), 10.7% require all their students to seek tutorial assistance outside of class; this number includes a major proportion of remedial writing course instructors. An additional 22.1% of our respondents indicated "some" of their students are assigned tutorial assistance. Outside help for students through required computer-assisted instruction is reported by only 7.3% of the faculty sample. Meeting with the instructor outside of class time is required for all students in class by 65% of the faculty respondents.

Another 32.0% require only some of their students to meet with them outside class.

b. Office Hours. The above data suggest a considerable commitment of outside time on the part of writing instructors. However, when offered an open-ended question about average weekly total time for course office hours, 66.1% of the respondents report three or fewer office hours a week. Though responses range from one hour to twenty hours weekly (only one person responded with twenty), the mean is 3.5 hours and the standard deviation, 2.5. While these numbers may be considered realistic in view of the heavy teaching load for composition faculty, they do raise questions about the reports of required consultation with students described above.

c. Adjunct Services. The low proportion of instructors requiring students to seek tutorial assistance suggests that instructors might not have access to such services or might not believe them relevant to coursework. We asked faculty whether they refer students to a learning center, writing lab, or tutoring center, for assistance in writing skills. In response, 92.3% say they do so. We further queried about the perceived articulation between such services and the writing course; 75.2% of the sample "know[s] what work students do there." However, only 51.6% reports receiving feedback from the lab or center about students sent there, and only 28.9% reports that student work completed there "counts" in course grades. When asked whether they are

"satisfied with the articulation between learning/tutoring center or writing lab work and classroom work," only 54.1% of the faculty responding say yes.

4. Influences on Writing Program Operations

We were interested, in our interviewing, in determining campus influences on writing programs. However we do not want to assume that the perceptions of the administrators we interviewed are necessarily congruent with or representative of the perceptions of writing instructors. Because of this concern, we include in the faculty survey a section on variables affecting the campus writing program. In that section we list twenty-three possible influences and ask respondents to rate each in terms of the degree (major, moderate, minor) and the direction (positive, neutral, negative) of this influence.

Our preliminary analysis suggests very few respondents perceive or are willing to indicate they perceive negative influences on the composition program from among those twenty-three we list. Nevertheless, we find sufficient range in responses on the degree of positive influence from each variable. Correlational analysis suggests several of these influences share a relationship at least in the mind of the respondents. We constructed two correlation matrices: one for this set of program variables alone, and one for these variables together with the set of instructional variables. These matrices were used in factor analyses described in the section immediately following.

5. Factor Analysis of Questionnaire Data

The goal of these analyses is the generation of factors describing college writing programs. If campus programs can be described in terms of their differences on these factors, the factors can be used to group programs and to link student outcome data (to be gathered in Phase II) to differences in each program type. Descriptive statistics from the questionnaire data suggest two levels of information. The first includes those variables describing general writing program features. The second covers variables describing specific instructional features.

To create the program factors, we relied upon correlation matrices incorporating the 31 Likert items and the 23 program influence items. (See Appendix, Volume II of this report, questionnaire items 4-35 and 46.) We performed orthogonal factor analyses using varimax rotation of the correlation matrix (with Kaiser normalization). As usual, our input offered more factors with eigenvalues at or above 1 than made intuitive sense. Two rules guided final decisions on factors. First, the number of legitimate factors was based upon the number of factors with eigenvalues at or above .95. Second, within that number we retained only those factors for which three or more variables loaded at .40 or greater.

Our interpretations and reflections led to an agreed upon set of seven factors describing questionnaire responses on items about the composition program in general. Tables 14a-g

present these factors with variable loadings and eigenvalues. The second set of factors, those describing instructional traits of faculty, were also derived from an orthogonal, varimax solution and the same selection criteria. These six factors are listed in Tables 15a-f along with commonalities and eigenvalues.

a. Program Factors. Factor 1 (Table 14a) we label campus climate for composition because it subsumes responses about campus policies affecting writing: the upper-division writing requirement, placement of students in regular or remedial composition, and the required English Placement Test.

Factor 2 (Table 14b) is called student context primarily because the three most strongly grouped items describe linguistic, ethnic, and academic student characteristics as influences on the composition program. Less strongly related influences in this grouping are academic services offered by EOP, faculty morale, and presence of tenured faculty in the writing program. EOP services are probably drawn into this cluster because economically disadvantaged students brought in under EOP are also likely to be those students less fluent in academic writing. The inclusion of items on faculty morale and the presence of tenured faculty in the program may reflect perceptions held by those who view tenured literature faculty as not well suited to teach writing to second-language or second-dialect students.

Factor 3, adjunct writing assistance describes perceptions about writing instruction available outside the regular classroom. Also drawn to this factor are items describing influences from recent composition research and from the presence of non-English department faculty teaching English writing classes. These items may reflect two different kinds of programs where outside writing assistance is a major program feature, e.g., programs D and F. (In the first case, program D, there does seem to be a conscious theoretical basis for the English writing lab activities and curricula. In the second case, program F, the outside assistance is the only remedial instruction available, and it is in another, "non-English," department.) The smaller factor loading scores might then reflect the relatively smaller proportion of respondents working within either of these kinds of program arrangements. (See interview analysis, Chapter Eight, especially Section 5.)

Factor 4, program leadership context, draws together many items which together characterize program leadership in terms of participation, and staff relations and morale. These items also group with responses to the item describing the programmatic influence from staff training in composition instruction. Responses to these items all move in the same direction on the scale: faculty who feel composition training has had a strong positive impact on the program also feel the various sources of leadership and the staff morale and

relations are strong positive influences (and vice versa). Though we cannot infer cause-effect from factor analysis, we can speculate about the clustering of these responses. Perhaps strong positive leadership makes the more successful attempts at faculty development, or successfully attracts the more knowledgeable instructors (perhaps part-timers) to teach the writing courses.

Factor 5, cohesiveness of the composition program, clusters together items describing mechanisms for establishing a common core of instruction for the different sections of the same course.

Factors 6a and 6b require much more care in explication because of the sensitive ground they cover, faculty attitudes toward composition instruction. The first factor, 6a, is labeled "bah humbug" as a reflection of the consistently negative stance described by the seven Likert items it groups together. Also, a greater number of these items have higher weights or loadings than is generally true for the other factors (five of seven items are above .50). This means that, for a large number of our respondents, these items evoke very similar answers, either in agreement or disagreement. For the most part, the items speak for themselves (see Table 14f). Together they suggest a keen distaste for remedial instruction, regular instruction, and faculty development in composition instruction; and a sharp skepticism about new writing theory, about students' ability to profit

from instruction, and about the need for supervision of tenured literature faculty teaching writing.

Factor 6b is labeled level of commitment because the questionnaire items it subsumes describe aspects of composition instruction beyond the call of duty: using extra preparation time, experimenting with colleagues' ideas, expanding curricular goals to include student attitudes, keeping abreast of colleagues' instruction. Further, faculty responding "strongly agree" to these Likert items are also in strong agreement with the proposition that writing class evaluations be a part of promotion/retention decisions. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this factor is the apparent relationship these Likert items share with responses to the importance of two instructional themes: editing and prewriting skills. This is the only "program" factor that draws instructional themes. It may be that the "prewriting" theme manages to attract instructors who are proponents of the newer "writing-as-process" approach in which prewriting skills are greatly emphasized. The "editing" theme is less easily explained, mainly because we would expect "revising" rather than editing to also attract process theory advocates.

b. Instructional Factors. Unlike the program factors, the instructional factors are meant to describe writing programs in terms of the instructional behavior of teaching staff. We want to establish instructional factors from subsets of variables so that we can describe composition

instruction as fully as possible and still distinguish among instructional approaches which overlap in use of materials, or assignments, but which are nevertheless more different than alike. (While this set of instructional factors was derived from a correlation matrix distinct from that for program factors, the instructional themes variables were used as part of each of the two factor sets.) See Tables 15a-f.

Factor 1, the literature approach, includes variables describing materials, instructional goals, and class activity. The three materials are (1) poetry and fiction anthologies; (2) anthologies containing poetry, fiction and nonfiction; and (3) individual works of literature. The instructional theme for this factor is to expose students to good literature, and the main class activities are analyzing literature and analyzing prose models of composition.

Factor 2, the composing process approach, includes two instructional goal: "teaching invention skills such as prewriting, planning, clustering and use of heuristics," and providing a workshop setting for in-class writing. Students' own writings are the main instructional materials used for the class. The remaining variables in this factor describe activities and arrangements in class: simultaneous small groups, students working with other students, free writing or journal writing, and students discussing or scoring their own writing.

Factor 3, the rhetorical modes approach, draws on three materials variables together: rhetorical texts, either with or without usage handbooks, and nonfiction anthologies. The instructional theme included in this factor is to "proceed developmentally through discourse modes from, e.g., description to persuasion." Classroom activities in this factor included working on or discussing composition texts and materials, and analyzing prose models.

Factor 4, the basic skills approach, groups two related instructional themes: "teaching for competence with basic units of prose, e.g., phrase, sentence, paragraph"; and "teaching correct grammar and usage." Grammar and usage handbooks are the main materials included in this factor, and the main classroom activity is the discussion of mechanics and standard usage.

Factor 5, the in-class workshop approach, also includes two instructional themes: (1) to allow for frequent in-class writing; and (2) to provide for regular in-class writing in a workshop setting. No materials items are related to this factor; however, particular activities and classroom arrangements are class time used for writing essays on a given topic, work with tutors, and individual student work during which the teacher circulates among students.

Factor 6, the service course approach, includes the instructional theme "to allow for practice in those writing activities necessary for success in other college courses, e.g., term papers and research papers." The class activity

item central to this factor is discussion of techniques for writing research/term papers. Also, this factor is the only one which includes the assignments variable: in this case, writing research or term papers.

c. Discussion of Factor Analysis Results. Several interesting points are found in these results. First of all, our factor analysis revealed two levels of factors, programmatic and instructional. At the program level, our results describe both the campus setting, including student characteristics, campus policies and support services for writing, and the program setting, including leadership, morale, and policies. Secondly, we are gratified to find that our questionnaire did what it was supposed to do. It provided a multi-dimensional view of instruction, tapping into instructional goals, materials, class activities, arrangements, assignments and feedback on assignments. The factor structures indicate, not surprisingly, that different aspects of instruction are more or less relevant to particular instruction goals. For example, where frequent in-class writing in a workshop setting is important, texts and assignments are not, but class arrangements and activities are. This kind of result, besides being intuitively logical, suggests that we have indeed identified distinct teaching approaches in composition for our sample.

We have begun contrastive analyses using factor scores for both sets of factors. Those analyses will be described and discussed in our next annual report.

Table 14a-g

RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSES ON PROGRAM VARIABLES
FROM ITEMS ON FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE*

a. Factor 1: CAMPUS CLIMATE FOR COMPOSITION

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
Likert items:	
the upper-division writing requirement for graduation on this campus is meaningful and appropriate (.47)	.61
the upper-division writing requirement for graduation has promoted interest in comp. campuswide (.54)	.67
on this campus, method of placing students in regular or remedial comp. is accurate (.42)	.46
influences on comp. programs:	
the English Placement Test (.44)	.38

eigenvalue = 1.0

b. Factor 2: STUDENT CONTEXT

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
influences on program:	
faculty morale (.45)	.36
academic services sponsored by EOP (.50)	.38
regular tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching composition (.39)	.37
caliber of students on this campus (.60)	.71
number of students on campus who are not native speakers of English (.86)	.89
number of students on this campus who experience second dialect interference in their writing (.85)	.88
the English Placement Test for freshman and transfers (.44)	.36

eigenvalue = 9.4

c. Factor 3: *ADJUNCT WRITING INSTRUCTION*

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
Likert items:	
writing instruction by tutors or in the learning center/writing lab is useful and effective (.47)	.60
influences on comp. program:	
recent comp. theory and research (.50)	.36
academic services sponsored by EOP (.50)	.43
the learning center, tutoring center, writing lab, or other support services (.50)	.63
faculty from other departments (who are) teaching comp. in the English department (.52)	.37

eigenvalue = 1.3

d. Factor 4: PROGRAM LEADERSHIP CONTEXT

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
Likert items:	
cooperative and supportive relationship among writing staff (.47)	.46
can freely discuss ideas and problems with comp. program coordinator (.46)	.51
influences on program:	
training in teaching comp. (.46)	.38
faculty morale (.45)	.38
the composition coordinator (.76)	.80
the composition committee (.72)	.70
the English department chair (.50)	.54

eigenvalue = 3.5

Factor Analyses Tables (continued)

e. Factor 5: COHESIVENESS OF COMPOSITION PROGRAM

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
influences on comp. program:	
agreed upon standards for grading in comp. classes (.68)	.68
formal or informal agreement among instructors about comp. course curricula (.80)	.81
formal or informal agreement among instructors about instructional methods for comp. courses (.82)	.80

eigenvalue = 2.0

f. Factor 6a: ATTITUDES TOWARD COMPOSITION: "BAH HUMBUG"

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
Likert items:	
tenured and tenure track instructors do NOT need review or coordination of their instruction (.42)	.35
I'm NOT likely to attend faculty development sessions to improve my comp. instruction (.46)	.52
had I the choice, I'd never teach undergraduate writing courses (.88)	.66
pre-college-level writers should not be admitted (.44)	.63
college resources should NOT support remedial writing instructional programs (.43)	.63
"Writing as process" strikes me as yet another fad (.60)	.58
students don't improve their writing much in one school term (.31)	.49
eigenvalue = 1.7	

g. Factor 6b: ATTITUDES TOWARD COMPOSITION: LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
Likert items:	
comp. instruction requires more preparation than my other courses do (.27)	.43
I've tried out new comp. instruction ideas suggested by colleagues (.45)	.52
student evaluations from my comp. courses should effect retention or promotion (.52)	.35
concern with students' feelings is a legitimate part of comp. instruction (.38)	.50
I have fairly good sense of what is going on in other comp. instructors' classes (.29)	.39
instructional themes:	
teaching editing skills (.24)	.39
teaching invention skills, e.g., prewriting (.35)	.41
eigenvalue = 1.2	

Table 15a-f

RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSES ON INSTRUCTIONAL ITEMS
FROM FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE*

a. Factor 1: THE LITERATURE APPROACH

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
instructional theme:	
to expose students to good literature (.56)	.70
instructional materials:	
poetry and fiction anthologies (.66)	.68
poetry, fiction, and non-fiction anthologies (.49)	.64
individual works of literature (.55)	.71
class activities:	
analyzing literature (.69)	.82
analyzing prose models of composition (.49)	.35

eigenvalue = 6.0

b. Factor 2: THE COMPOSING PROCESS APPROACH

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
instructional theme:	
to teach invention skills, such as planning, prewriting, clustering, heuristics (.33)	.42
to provide regular in-class writing in a workshop setting (.58)	.37
instructional materials:	
students' own writing (.24)	.42
classroom arrangements:	
simultaneous small group activities, during which I circulate among the working groups (.56)	.66
class activities:	
free writing or journal writing (.43)	.52
students discussing or scoring their own writing (.57)	.72
students working with other students (.71)	.82

eigenvalue = 4.2

Factor Analyses Tables (continued)

c. Factor 3: THE RHETORICAL MODES APPROACH

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
instructional theme:	
to proceed developmentally through discourse modes from, e.g., description to persuasion (.38)	.51
instructional materials:	
non-fiction anthology (.43)	.63
rhetoric text or style book, without handbook (.50)	.49
rhetoric text or style book, handbook included (.40)	.56
class activities:	
working on or discussing material in texts on composition (.50)	.61
analyzing prose models of composition (.49)	.56

eigenvalue = 2.5

d. Factor 4: THE BASIC SKILLS APPROACH

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
instructional theme:	
to teach for competence with basic units of prose, e.g., phrase, sentence, paragraph (.35)	.51
to teach correct grammar and usage (.53)	.69
instructional materials:	
grammar and usage handbook (.34)	.46
class activities:	
discussing mechanics and standard usage (.52)	.65

eigenvalue = 1.8

e. Factor 5: THE IN-CLASS WORKSHOP APPROACH

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
instructional theme:	
to allow for frequent in-class writing (.67)	.79
to provide regular in-class writing in a workshop setting (.58)	.59
classroom arrangements:	
individual work, permitting me to circulate among working students (.45)	.47
class activities:	
writing essays on a given topic (.31)	.50
working with tutors during class (.47)	.41

eigenvalue = 1.4

f. Factor 6: THE SERVICE COURSE APPROACH

questionnaire item (communality)	factor loading
instructional theme:	
to practice writing activities necessary for success in other college courses, e.g., term papers (.56)	.65
kinds of writing assignments:	
writing a term paper or research paper (.64)	.74
class activities:	
discussing techniques for writing research papers (.71)	.76

eigenvalue = 1.3

*NOTE: Of all the variables in the factor analysis run, only those with factor loadings equal to or greater than .35 are included on these tables.

CHAPTER TEN

Discussion of Findings from the Descriptive Phase

We have been looking at writing programs on the nineteen campuses of The California State University, which includes most combinations of broad campus-level characteristics that are likely to occur in American higher education: urban and suburban, large and small predominantly white and ethnically mixed. On the other hand, The California State University system is rare in its financial and political commitment to improvement of student composition skills. For the last six years, students applying to any of the nineteen CSU campuses have been required to take a systemwide English Placement Test which includes three multiple-choice subtests (sentence construction, logic and organization, and reading) and one writing sample. Campuses receive funds for remedial instruction on the basis of the number of students scoring below a common cut-point; however, each campus decides how to spend these funds to improve the writing of entering, low-scoring students. In addition to this entering placement test, the CSU system has added a requirement for graduation, upper-division certification of writing competence. Unlike the placement test policy, the graduation requirement is not defined by scores on a systemwide exam; there is no such common mechanism. Instead, each campus determines its own

procedures for certifying upper-division writing skills and its own criteria for defining competence in writing. Also unlike the placement exam, the upper-division writing requirement does not have additional funds for either carrying out the new procedure or for "remediating" students who fail to pass. Nevertheless, students are denied diplomas if they have not satisfied this requirement.

Clearly, within this university system, there is a heightened awareness of the importance of writing instruction. Even non-English departments are faced with the real possibility of seeing their majors denied degrees if they cannot pass the writing proficiency requirement for graduation. And within the English department, English literature professors must respond to an increased demand for writing classes, a demand which includes instruction at the most basic level for those students whose placement test scores indicate the need for remediation and, in some cases, upper-division classes for students facing the graduation requirement. (Also, in some instances, campuses have decided to certify upper-division writing competence with an upper-division writing class offered by the English department or other departments.) In many ways, then, we see this nineteen-campus state system as an ideal setting in which to study college composition programs, in part because of the representative diversity of its campuses, and in part because administrators and faculty are now generally interested in and troubled by college composition program issues.

To investigate these issues and discover effective resolutions, we divided our research into phases. The first phase, completed last year and reported on here, was a descriptive effort aimed at determining salient program features distinguishing the various campus programs. The second phase, now begun, is our evaluative effort, aimed at linking those distinguishing characteristics with differences in student writing performance and faculty development. The third phase has been planned for analyses, reflection, and reanalysis. Work from the descriptive phase, set out in this report, provides the basis for the evaluative and theoretical work which will follow.

Data Sources

Our first effort in describing programs focused on obtaining explications of campus policies and procedures in relation to the writing program. We sent each English department chair a "Fact Sheet" asking for program information on matters we suspected were amenable to policy declarations, such as the use of placement test scores, sequence of and prerequisites for lower-division writing courses, course staffing, and common course exams, syllabi, tests, or assignments.

On a subsample of ten campuses (twelve programs), we interviewed academic vice presidents, deans, directors of learning centers and Educational Opportunity Programs, English department chairs, composition program coordinators

and, where they existed, remedial program coordinators. Among other things, we asked these administrators to describe the development of writing program policies that affect all students, using the upper-division writing requirement as an example. English chairs and composition program coordinators were further asked about the remedial and freshman composition courses.

Our third source for policy information was the writing faculty on all nineteen campuses. Of the 750 or so instructors teaching lower-division required writing courses, 55% returned our faculty questionnaire asking about attitudes and beliefs related to composition instruction and the composition program, and about the relative importance and the predominant reason for particular instructional goals, materials, and methods they used in freshman composition or remedial writing courses.

Our analyses also focused on the descriptive. We considered frequency distributions and formed factors using responses to questionnaire items, and we created large nominal descriptive categories from responses to the main topics of the interview protocols. (Additional analyses are being carried out this year.)

We began our descriptive analysis with a rather traditional conception of instructional programs. See, for example, the research questions posed at the beginning of Chapter Four.

By the time we began to analyze the data, these questions had been refined to the following:

1. What are the goals of composition instruction at the college level?

2. What programmatic activities are implemented, presumably to meet these goals?

3. How do features of the program setting (context) moderate those goals and activities?

Early on we decided to focus our data collection by restricting our definition of composition programs to lower-division, required writing courses, commonly called "freshman composition," remedial prerequisite instruction, and adjunct writing instruction available outside the classroom (from such activities as workshops, tutorials, learning centers). We also agreed that we were not interested in individual instructor's classroom practices per se. Instead, we chose to focus on programmatic qualities that transcend the individual. Thus, instruction becomes important as one of many features possibly governed by program guidelines in an effort to establish standard course content, method, or materials.

Our interest in comparability among class sections seems to conflict with a key assumption underlying our research questions, i.e., that there are such things as programs of instruction at the postsecondary level. If the real world conformed to a theoretic model, we would not need to inquire about the relationships among program policies,

program procedures, and instructional activities; we could assume that announced policies were always acknowledged and followed, and that individual beliefs and activities appeared only when allowed by policy or by an absence of policy. However, our intention was to discover what was actually occurring on the campuses we studied, real worlds that called for a different and a not quite so neat model.

At the start of our descriptive data analysis we were forced to confront this complex issue and to distinguish genuine policies from individual decisions; we needed to distinguish personal beliefs and activities from truly programmatic ones in order to discover whether or not writing programs could be said to exist in our sample of campuses. We agreed that we would consider a policy as programmatic only if it could be shown to be documented, widely communicated, widely followed, and both enforceable and enforced.

Program Goals

We expected to encounter descriptions of traditional student-oriented goals describing gains in essay writing performance. However, recent advances in composition theory and research have expanded traditional notions to include students' awareness of writing processes such as recursive planning and revision, and the use of writing as a tool for thinking and learning. We had hopes of finding a variety of goals statements, some of which would make reference to new theory.

In fact, the recent great advances in the field of composition, coupled with increased demand for composition classes, have created a unique situation in which English literature specialists who generally populate English departments are called upon to teach basic college writing courses. To untangle such a paradox, there must be some faculty development (as college-level in-service training is often called) and, at the very least, mechanisms for staff to share knowledge and experiences. Accordingly, we were prepared to find faculty-oriented goals of the sort that might best be called intermediary or enabling goals; that is, goals describing changes in faculty knowledge, attitudes, skills, or behaviors deemed necessary to accomplish the desired student outcomes. Further, with the additional upper-division writing requirement for graduation, we thought we might see program goals which included a little "consciousness raising" for faculty in other departments. During analysis of our interview transcripts it became clear that serious, well-defined goals statements of any sort are the very rare exception to the general rule of none. Thus, our first category of goals is easily defined as "laissez-faire." Into this category we are able to place most of the twelve programs in our interview sample (example below).

> COORD #1: I hope that one [goals statement] is emerging. And that is, I think, basically what the composition committee has been directing itself to this fall.

INT: Does the department have any kind of, while you're putting together those goals statements, any other kind of guidelines for people teaching comp.?

COORD #1: No, there hasn't been. The only guidelines that have existed have been rather general and perfunctory descriptions of the course that appear in the university catalog.

. . . . . .

INT: And in [the freshman comp. course], do you include something like a description of the standards you expect students to meet in order to pass that course?

COORD #2: No, we don't. Probably should, but we don't. Our department is so individualistic that they have a hard time agreeing and [there's the] feeling that someone else is going to impose what they are going to do.

Though six of our twelve program coordinators do talk about goals for both remedial and regular composition, when asked by our interviewer, their remarks are at a very general level.

COORD #3: The only answer I can give to that is to say when I first took the job and I got up to speak to the department about something, somebody raised his hand and said what is your philosophy? What do you want the students to learn? I said, if I want the students to learn anything, I want them to learn to be concrete and specific in their writing. And everybody nodded. So I assume that is the underlying philosophy. I think it is a [given] that we look for reasonable grammar and mechanics and punctuation. That is obvious. I suppose the underlying issue is the student should be clear.

What we had expected is rarely voiced. Few coordinators offer clear descriptions of expectations for students completing

remedial instruction. No one mentions student goals other than writing performance. No one includes faculty goals in the discussion of desirable program outcomes. Here is the most comprehensive statement we were able to elicit. Its specificity is unique in our sample.

> COORD: Yes, there is something in writing. In fact, we have a rather substantial manual which guides the program. This manual originally was prepared in 1977 by the Composition Committee and it was more recently edited and reduced, updated. It spells out course objectives for freshman composition, and even [remedial]. It suggests textbooks for each of those courses; it spends quite a lot of time suggesting various classroom methods or strategies that instructors might exercise in order to strike writing targets. So, yes, there is something in fact quite formal spelling out our philosophy and goals.

In sum, when we ask about program goals, most coordinators are able to talk about preferred instructional methods or available sample syllabi or recommended texts, but not student goals. Most of those coordinators who do speak of student outcomes are very general in their descriptions or limit their detailed student objectives to the remedial courses in the program.

It may be the case that it is easier to agree upon and articulate expectations for remedial student writers than for the regular college composition student. It certainly seems to be the case that we need to think about what it is that college students are supposed to gain from college-level writing instruction. This ambiguity, we expect, may come

back to haunt the campuses as they struggle to define and implement the required certification of students' upper-division writing skills for graduation.

While it is difficult to pinpoint a common characteristic of programs with clean and thorough goals, it is easy to see a shared feature of the others. In each such case the program coordinator describes a staff in part made up of resistant tenured (or tenure-track) literature professors less than thrilled with the need for college English departments to teach a general education course in composition, let alone remedial writing. Further, all the coordinators we interviewed report little knowledge of or control over the classroom practices of tenured faculty who are reportedly rarely, if ever, evaluated as writing instructors. We had anticipated this issue to some extent in our thinking about the implementation of a composition program as shaped by attempts to cope with these real and common problems.

Programmatic Instruction

We looked next at the instructional component of program implementation. Is there comparability among classes taught by different instructors? And, how is this managed? Unfortunately, all but one of our department and program leaders report they do not know what goes on in the classrooms of tenured instructors teaching composition. Tenured faculty are not visited or otherwise systematically monitored or

evaluated as writing instructors. In contrast, part-time instructors or full-time lecturers (contract employees) are talked about as if they are a unit or cadre: they are usually hired and trained (or oriented) by the program coordinator, monitored regularly, and often concurrently enrolled in or recently graduated from the newer graduate programs specializing in composition instruction (examples below).

> INT: How well do you feel you know what goes on in composition classes?
>
> COORD #5: I think it's getting better and better. I have to divide that into two. What we know about what's going on in the courses that are taught by part-time faculty is very, very good because we have a system of visitations and evaluations, and that also applies to our teaching assistants. ...As far as the full-time (regular) faculty, I would have to tell you that it's [iffy] at best.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> COORD #6: Well, I don't know what goes on in the classes of the full-time faculty. And the nature of our faculty here is such that nobody is ever going to know what goes on. Our faculty is very restless with any kind of organization. They don't like to be monitored and won't stand for it. Who knows what goes on in their classes? Only God knows.
>
> I don't have to monitor what goes on in the part-time instructors' classes. I found out a long time ago, years ago, when I was really worried about it. They are homogeneously trained. And their hiring process is so meticulous and thorough that anybody who survives it is automatically guaranteed to be compulsive. And they teach the way they have been taught to teach. They teach what they have been taught to teach. The new instructors have to take an in-service course during the first

> semester of teaching that has a student-faculty ratio of six to one, or lower. And in that course they bring the materials they developed for the [composition] course to the seminar. They share them; they get criticized. They do critiques in the group; they bring their problems to the seminar to be ironed out... During the second semester they are evaluated by the English Composition Committee; each person is visited by two different committee members and so on. We have run into instances in which, although not very many, in which instructors have decided that despite everything they are really going to go their own way. And that usually turns up in their evaluations. ...And if we are not able to work with the instructors and bring them around, we fire them.

These two excerpts are good representatives of comments we heard from almost all composition coordinators. In particular, references to careful hiring, class visits, orientation or formal training sessions, handouts of course guidelines or sample syllabi, and the use of recommended texts lists are found in all descriptions of part-timers' classrooms. However, also omnipresent in coordinators' comments are confessions of ignorance about what the regular faculty are doing.

In this study, we relied upon our survey questionnaire to help us determine what the tenured and tenure-track faculty are thinking, and whether as a group they are different in terms of such matters as instructional themes or goals underlying instruction, materials important to that instruction, classroom arrangements, instructional methods, and kind and amount of writing assignments. We carefully constructed our items to allow for a variety of common approaches to surface,

and we are gratified to find that, through our factor analysis of questionnaire responses, we can identify six distinct instructional factors which appear to be reflective of (1) the literature approach - intent upon exposing students to good literature, seemingly as models of good writing; (2) the composing process approach - which provides frequent opportunities for students to write and review their writing; (3) the rhetorical modes approach - closely related perhaps to the composing process approach, but different in a reliance upon learning from prose models and rhetorical texts; (4) the basic skills approach - usually but not always, the remedial course instructor, concerned with correct expression in student writing; (5) the workshop approach - very much like the composing process approach, though seemingly more focused on the instructional method than specific skills and materials; and (6) the service course approach - perceiving the required composition coursework as preparation for writing in other college courses, and other college writing as primarily term or research papers.

We have just completed our analyses of part-timer and regular faculty scores on instructional factors and we find these distinctions are significant for some factors. Nonetheless, we do find fewer distinctions in classroom practice between the two faculty status categories than expected. As our research continues, we will continue to look closely at this status variable, and continue to ask if it is meaningful.

Regardless of our findings, the difference in the program coordinator's knowledge and influence over part-timers and regular faculty is a serious complication for the evaluation of any composition program where both sorts of instructors are used. If monitoring and evaluation of regular faculty teaching writing is a near impossibility, what means are available to composition program coordinators for assuring enlightened and comparable instruction in those instructors' classes? Aside from relying upon part-timers, how can a program develop an instructional staff that shares enough information and interest to maintain a state-of-the-art common core of curricula and instructional methods in composition?

Faculty Development

People working in the world of college composition programs use the term, "faculty development," to refer to an entire range of activities whose goals are to help ease the transition for the literature-trained faculty members in English departments (or other content specialists in other departments which offer writing instruction) who must now function as writing class instructors. These activities can be as marginal as circulating a research article or as vigorous as a required graduate seminar in composition theory.

For the most part, all our interviewees describe the reluctance and even occasional adamant refusal of regular

tenured and tenure-track faculty to take on lower-division writing class instruction. Composition program coordinators, then, find themselves in a position in which they must ease this situation and attempt to upgrade or ensure instructional quality by offering opportunities for retraining faculty for their newly expanded role. Ironically, because of the recent burgeoning interest in writing instruction as a legitimate field of study, many part-time instructors who are new M.A. graduates are often much better informed about writing theory and often even trained in teaching writing. This exacerbated generational conflict can further strain the relationship between regular tenured faculty and the writing program in which they must participate.

In our interviews we asked composition coordinators and department chairs about their faculty development efforts, recent and ongoing, in the field of composition theory. They describe a variety of methods but report little success; that is, when success is defined as reaching the regular faculty members, which is how all our interviewees talk about it, every administrator reports difficulty.

> ENG CHAIR #1: We have an informal luncheon meeting called "comp. meetings" help perhaps once every six weeks in which we, as a faculty, are to read an article and discuss it. Or have an individual faculty member come and discuss an article on which he may be working, on composition. Or which he has read and wished to use as a focal point for an hour, an hour and a half discussion. In that sense, refining faculty understanding of the composition field.

INT: Are those well attended?

ENG CHAIR: Often the people who attend the meeting and are most interested are also, of course, those who know the most about it. And those who need it the most are nowhere to be seen.

. . . . . .

COORD #1: We have occasionally had, and would like to have now, some kind of seminars or get-together...we will try to have one or two a semester. We don't always.

INT: What kind of response do you get from the faculty?

COORD: Not strong.

INT: And is it correct to say that what you've been saying is that the part-timers are very ready [meet about grading essays] and it's kind of tough to get the other to join?

COORD #2: That's pretty accurate. And the others, they take the time to say 'I'd really like to come to that and I can't.' And I think part of it is that conflict in their souls between composition and literature. They say, 'Look, I'm going to give just so much time a week to composition. I believe in it; teaching is an important thing, but I'm not going to that discussion session. It's too much of my time.' ...Oh they'd love to know in two seconds what happened at that discussion session. But they don't want to take that hour and a half.

Some coordinators report relatively more success than others. For the most part, the more successful formal faculty development efforts use one of two approaches: (1) mandatory, enforced prerequisite coursework in composition before assignment to teaching composition; or (2) socially contexted "meetings" for which composition topics and materials are prepared ahead, but which are not overtly designated as

faculty development. It is important to note that the two programs with prerequisite coursework are campuses with graduate master's programs in the teaching of composition, and that the required course is one of the degree program's core seminars. Not all campuses, in fact relatively few, have such degree programs to draw upon. Further, the successful socially-contexted retraining events are found in very small programs, in one instance in an ethnic studies department which has its own separate but equally accepted composition program.

It does seem clear that direct efforts to solve the problem of faculty retraining in composition are invariably unsuccessful. It is not hard to figure out a key source of this resistance. Until recently, composition was a service performed by the English Department for the benefit of the campus at large and the English department's own graduate students who were employed to teach the course. In short, it has been a task without academic recognition or reward.

Though it sounds like a losing battle, faculty development for regular faculty need not be; we have discovered a very simple event that succeeds in drawing together all writing instructors, regular and part time, and getting them to interact on the subject of composition instruction. A key additional benefit accrues to this event: establishing some comparability in instruction across classes taught by these different faculty members.

This successful process is simply instructor group scoring of student essays written to a common topic, whether the common essay is systemwide (as in the placement test writing sample offered three times a year, for which readers come from all nineteen campuses), campuswide (as in the case of essay exams certifying students' writing competence for graduation), or coursewide writing tests serving as mid-term or final exams. Those coordinators heading programs where common essay gradings are a policy talk about positive side benefits of the process: (1) interaction between part-time and regular faculty; (2) opportunities for discussion of composition theory and instructional methods, and as a consequence of these experiences; (3) increased comparability across course sections taught by different instructors; and (4) reports of changes in class instruction, e.g., more in-class writing. The following quotations come from the same composition coordinator, first, when he is asked about faculty development opportunities, second and third, when asked about his knowledge of the classroom practices of both part-timers and regular faculty teaching writing.

> COORD #3: Well, we did that for years. When I first started, we did that constantly...Where we would beg people to come, browbeat them, invite them, plead with them, bribe them with wine and cheese, and do everything we could to get them to come and listen to some of our best people talk about everything from minor problems, to grading techniques, to massive theories of composition.
>
> ...the final examination allows a great deal of that to occur, not just for being able to

> go back over and work with the statistics and the calculator, but the committee work that comes prior to that, working with people and setting up the topics, talking about the theory of composition. They bring in topics, possible topics. You learn something about it; you make comments and have an effect on people and vice versa. 'You can't make students write on that.' Also the reading sessions, where you spend a whole day with all your comp. staff, at every level and they're talking about composition, that's the focus. And prior to that, everybody went his own separate way and you never really, you really didn't know what was going on.
>
> ...There's an example of how you can affect your individuals, including brand new part-time people, on the basis of something like a (common) final exam. We have a pre-writing segment built into the final exam where they (students) may not write in their books, their blue books, for half an hour. People who may never have heard of pre-writing before, it's hard to believe nowadays, we inform them in the beginning of the semester what the exam is all about.

Remedial Writing Instruction

The CSU system is not alone in its dilemma of providing higher education to underprepared entering freshmen, but the systemwide English Placement Test and the special funds tied to student scores on that test imply that the CSU (unlike some universities) intends to accept responsibility for remediating student deficiencies in writing skills. The latitude given campuses in the expenditure of remedial funds has resulted in some variety in the implementation of this remediation policy. Nevertheless, it seems clear that all campuses regard this job as an English department task.

We do not want simply to document the implementation of remedial writing instruction; we believe such a description

misses a key issue that probably affects how that instruction is implemented. How do the English faculty and the campus administrators feel about this obligation? We asked this question directly in our interviews and questionnaire.

Academic vice presidents and deans of schools (within which the English departments reside) were fairly consistent in their expression of dismay tempered by a recognition of the inevitable. In a few instances, these administrators expressed concerns about the growing numbers of students who need remedial work (not just in English) before they can profit from the regular college coursework. Some of these campus administrators also suggest the community colleges as a way out of the expanding basic skills instructional programs; a few administrators would like to require underprepared students to put in some instructional time at the local junior college before entering the state university, despite the large shift in student enrollment such a policy would create. But, for the most part, there is acquiescence among those in our interview sample.

> DEAN OF HUMANITIES: I don't even know if I have an option any more, but I have this slight paranoia, and that is, there are really two colleges at every college. One is the official college, which is in the catalog, and it's all the courses that you and I have been talking about. And then the other college is the college of skills. ...Well, when you get to know the students involved, you obviously don't have an objective view of remediation...from a lofty standpoint, you say, 'Of course not, it's beneath college, it's really high school level stuff.' Then you get to know the students and their commitments and their

motivations, especially minority students, and you just can't take that lofty position.

. . . . . .

ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT: On the one hand, I feel good about the fact that students who are admitted and lack basic skills will be given an opportunity to learn them. Because if they don't then this impedes their progress and we have a revolving door situation. They come in and they lack basic skills; we don't give them to them and they're out. On the other hand, I think it's a shame that we have to. ...whether we should be doing them or the community colleges should be doing them, I think is a separate question. But if we're going to allow the students to come here, then it's obvious we're going to have a remedial writing program.

We obtained a glimpse of the faculty perspective from responses to Likert items on the questionnaire. From these responses, we were able to generate a series of factors, one of which contains these items on remedial instruction. However, these were not the only questionnaire items which form the remediation factor. It appears that we managed to tap into an attitude factor that describes faculty feelings toward teaching composition in general, including remedial. Consider these items, all of which group on the same factor:

Generally speaking, in this department tenured and tenure-track instructors do NOT need review or coordination of their writing instruction.

I'm NOT likely to attend meetings designed to improve my writing instruction, e.g., faculty development or 'retraining' sessions.

Had I the choice, I would never teach undergraduate writing courses.

Students who are not prepared to do college-level writing should NOT be admitted to this campus.

> College resources should NOT support remedial programs in writing.
>
> Much of what I've heard about 'writing as process' strikes me as yet another fad in the field of composition instruction.
>
> In every composition class I've taught here, I've finally had to admit to myself that most students do not improve their writing very much by the end of a single school term.

This pattern of related responses suggests to us that feelings about the remediation of student writers are bound up with feelings about teaching composition. We expect programs with reluctant writing faculty might also be those with the least well-developed remedial offerings; that is, that attitudes affect implementation. Our interview analyses suggest just that.

At one end of a spectrum of programmatic remediation we find a campus where the English department eschews remedial coursework. Students identified as remedial are placed into regular freshman composition classes, and tutors are provided in each class. The English department chair relies on the learning assistance center to supply trained tutors. With the additional in-class instructional aid, the English chair is able to increase class size, thus decreasing the number of writing sections that must be staffed by literature faculty, and precluding the need for any English faculty to teach remedial or basic writing. Foreign students needing remedial assistance find themselves in a linguistics department course.

At the other extreme there are programs offering several levels of coursework for various levels of student need. Some courses exist which the coordinators themselves label "pre-remedial"; others provide adjunct assistance for the better remedial students through homogeneous composition sections specifically set aside for these weak, but not weakest students. Often under the guidance of a remedial program coordinator, some of the programs in this group have aligned their pre-remedial course continuum with the content of the multiple-choice subtests of the English Placement Test, i.e, offering courses in reading, sentence construction, and logic and organization, and placing students on the basis of their subtest scores. (In two instances, remedial readers are referred to a reading course offered by the education department.) In interviews with these remedial coordinators we find a great deal of specificity in descriptions of pre-remedial course content, methods, materials, and goals, and instructor preparation.

About half of the programs in our interview sample provide these pre-remedial courses of instruction; an over-lapping group, again about half, choose to rely on a separate remedial course rather than on special composition course sections augmented by tutors. Two of these programs provide for common mid-term or final exams; but for the most part, unlike the pre-remedial, we find little in the way of mechanisms for ensuring much commonality among remedial course instructors.

Perhaps most interesting is the role, or rather the lack of participation, of tenured faculty in the remedial and pre-remedial coursework. We find only one program with significant involvement of tenured faculty (oddly, one of the two polytechnical campuses). Other than that, it is strictly part-timers and the lone tenured faculty member who is serving as the remedial program coordinator.

Campus Climate for Writing Instruction

In planning our investigation of writing programs, we recognized the potential for outside sources to influence composition program operations. Obviously the larger English department needs to be accounted for; but also, we believe there are opportunities for campus-level factors to affect programs. This is one of the main reasons we interviewed academic vice presidents, deans, and directors of special programs and learning assistance centers. We also asked faculty to rate a number of department variables in terms of the kind (positive/negative) and amount (strong/moderate/none) of influence these variables exert upon the composition program, and we included Likert items on campus characteristics.

From the faculty response to these items we were able to create seven program context factors, each describing a different aspect of the world in which composition programs operate. The first three factors relate to the campus at large: (1) campus climate surrounding composition matters, (2) adjunct writing assistance (available outside of the

classroom), and (3) student characteristics. The first factor includes faculty feelings about placement policy for entering students and policy for certifying upper-division writing competence. The second describes typical outside resources, such as the learning center and EOP services. This factor also accounts for the impact of faculty from other departments teaching writing in the English department, and the recent composition theory, as influences on the program. These last two variables may reflect campus involvement in the upper-division writing requirement where non-English department faculty are trained to teach upper-division courses for their student majors.

The third factor, student characteristics, includes a number of questionnaire items describing student language characteristics (dialect and second language problems), general perceptions of the quality of the student population as a whole, and a related variable, the influence of writing assistance provided by the EOP. In addition, there are two faculty characteristics items which load on this factor: general faculty morale (in the department) and the presence of tenured and tenure-track faculty in the composition instructor pool. We are a little surprised to find these last two variables grouped with these student items. However, it may be that those who view tenured faculty involvement as having somewhat of a negative influence on the program are also the people who are somewhat demoralized by the language obstacles facing their writing class students.

The rest of our program factors focus more closely upon the composition program itself. Factor four includes Likert items asking about the quality of the working relationship among staff and the accessibility of the composition coordinator. Five items from our questions on program influences are grouped with these Likerts. Three of those items concern various sources of leadership in composition: the composition program coordinator, the English department chair, and the Composition Committee. The other two items are faculty morale and training in composition instruction. We find it reasonable to expect that faculty morale has a positive influence on programs where leadership is also perceived positively and where faculty perceive themselves as trained and able to approach their program coordinator and colleagues on the subject of composition instruction.

The next factor describes mechanisms for establishing and maintaining a "program" of instruction in composition: agreed upon standards for grading, for curricula, and for methods. These faculty in our sample view these variables as a group, reacting to all of them in the same way, although some see the influence of the item group as positive, while others feel its influence as negative.

The last two factors are the most personal and the most revealing. We have labeled them as 6a and 6b because of the similarity in attitudinal territory they map. Nevertheless, these factors come from the same factor analysis run and

thus describe two distinct patterns of responses in our faculty sample. The first, 6a, groups only Likert items, and in particular, what we have been calling our "bah humbug" items. They are all worded in the negative and describe what might best be called a keen desire to avoid any active involvement in composition instruction. Of course, it is most important to remember that it may be everyone's common disagreement with these items that unites them. The second related factor, 6b, also includes primarily Likert items. In this case they are the "good guy" items; they describe all those positive sentiments one might expect to find among dedicated composition instructors, and seem to describe what we might call "level of commitment" to writing instruction. The interesting aspect of this factor is that it manages to draw faculty who also value one or both of two particular instructional themes: teaching editing skills and teaching invention (prewriting) skills. If we allow that these goals are among those more closely related to current composition theory, we are not surprised to find these items grouped with "dedication" items. Our interview data suggest that there are some faculty members who are seriously interested in composition theory and instruction.

We eagerly await the results of our ongoing analyses using these factors to characterize individual programs and faculty groups. We wonder whether or not the part-timer/ tenured distinction will reappear in these analyses.

The Upper-Division Writing Requirement

Our interview data on the upper-division writing competency requirement offer additional insight into the level of campus commitment to and involvement in college composition, for here is a policy that affects every department offering a degree. Students who do not pass the requirement do not receive their degrees, and it will be easy for the campus administration to tell which departments have the greatest problem graduating their majors under the new requirement. Clearly there is an incentive here for each department to become informed about, if not involved in, the creation and implementation of the campus certification policy.

We find we can account for all varieties of policy with just three categories of certification method. The first requires students to take an essay exam (sometimes with an objective subtest); the second provides a choice between exam or approved course; the third method requires certification through approved courses only, with no exam option. Those campuses with test-only policy allow students to retake the test if they do not pass the first time. Most administrators we spoke with are reluctant to put a ceiling on the number of retests a student may take. The most popular method (six of ten campuses) is the second method, allowing students to choose either the test or one of a number of acceptable courses. In some cases there is a planned overlap between the two options: students may "test

out" of the course part way through the school term, or may end up in the course as a direct consequence of failing the test. The remaining category, course only, is used on only one campus.

Potentially, each of these three methods allows for the involvement of faculty and administrators outside the English department. We find in our interviews that, depending upon who is committed and to what extent, the writing requirement can be an enriching and unifying experience, or a genuine bother. In most cases, the initiative for involving others lies with the English department, which is seen as the source of resident experts on writing instruction and evaluation of writing skill. The opportunity for the English department to seek outside involvement presents itself in the campus Literacy Committee.

We found such committees on all but one campus, and on that one campus the upper-division requirement, a writing test, is solely the English department's responsibility. The department Composition Committee formulates the test question and administers the test. The composition coordinator explains: "There was a Writing Committee for the university and it proved to be unworkable and was disbanded." On two other campuses the upper-division requirement is also the exclusive domain of the English department. In both cases the impression given in the interviews is that the writing requirement belongs to English and it is a departmental

responsibility to see that the requirement is appropriate and is enforced.

Two other campuses also leave sole responsibility to the English department, though in both these cases this responsibility is a result of inaction on the part of the English department. In one instance, the department chair describes his deliberate refusal to participate on the campuswide Literacy Committee and then later, in the same interview, talks about how the campus committee decided to let each department select a suitable course; he then goes on to describe how all the other departments have selected the English department's designated course, placing a tremendous enrollment burden on the department staff.

Only two campuses in our sample are actively pursuing campuswide involvement and responsibility for the upper-division requirement. Both rely upon specified upper-division courses which, if approved, may be non-English department courses. In one case, students in the diverse approved courses must all take a common essay exam, graded by the group of course instructors from the diverse departments. As described in the section on faculty development, when these course instructors meet to grade the common essays, a good deal of faculty development takes place. In this way, then, diverse courses may be deemed acceptable for the upper-division requirement with a little less anxiety than if there were no such "quality control" mechanism. The

second campus in this group takes the opposite approach: rigorous committee scrutiny of proposed courses. As the composition coordinator admits, relatively few courses outside the English department have been accepted, in part because the acceptance relies on the availability of an instructor who has been approved by the English department. Department approval rests on the completion of one of the graduate courses in composition offered by the department as part of its master's program in composition.

Summary and Conclusions

It is difficult to summarize the vast amount of diverse descriptive information we have uncovered and interpreted. Too much interpretation may not even be an appropriate activity, since the research focus for Phase I has been descriptive. We will need to see if any of these program features do in fact make a substantial difference in student performance and attitudes, or in faculty behaviors and attitudes, though in this latter case it already appears clear that we will find such differences.

As we worked on integrating and reducing our tremendous amount of archival, interview, and questionnaire data, several issues presented themselves. Rather than summarize program descriptions, then, we would rather consider the implications of those issues.

"Consciousness-Raising." A particularly pressing issue in research or evaluation of postsecondary composition programs

is the goals issue or, rather, the lack-of-goals issue. We simply do not find program goals, aims, or purposes which describe student gains resulting from composition coursework. On rare occasions, we find descriptions of remedial coursework goals, most often defined in terms of ability to profit from regular composition course instruction. But what about students in the regular course?

The existence of widespread, formal, remedial coursework is relatively new on the postsecondary scene, whereas freshman composition has been a standard General Education requirement for a longer time. Also, partly as a response to that need for remedial instruction at the college level, there has been a recent explosion of research and theory on composition instruction. Indeed, many of the seminal works in the new "writing as process" field were conducted with college students, and often by college professors or program administrators responsible for that instruction (Perl, 1979; Shaughnessy, 1977; Sommers, 1979). It makes sense, then, that this new research has been applied in the development of remedial writing programs, programs not yet locked into tradition, programs often accompanied by special funds, programs still amenable to experimentation. On the other hand, the standard freshman composition course, in all of its various manifestations, stands before us as "traditional." We have not been confronted with its failure, as we have with the failure of college preparatory high school English.

We have not scrutinized its workings or thought much about its purposes beyond filling the General Education requirement. (See Chapter Two for a review of the literature in this area.)

It is no wonder that, in our examination of college writing programs, we have not found many sites with stated program goals or cohesive sequential curricula. There has been little incentive or perceived need to consider or reconsider writing coursework as a program of instruction; it could be whatever the individual English teacher wanted it to be. Remedial instruction is a separate entity by virtue of its novelty, its funding, its no-graduation-credit status, its students. For those English faculty interested in the new composition theory, remedial instruction invites experimentation.

Thus, the effectiveness of a writing program should not be measured only in terms of meetings its "goals." Larger and wider-ranging issues are involved. Perhaps, for example, we ought to be uncovering descriptions of successful "consciousness raising," not just in terms of campuswide interest and enlightenment, but also in terms of the English department faculty perspective on composition. In fact, when we re-examine our own sample of campuses, we find that this approach reveals much more to us. In this university system, that "consciousness-raising" is being stimulated by a strong incentive, the upper-division writing requirement

for graduation. We find evidence that the way in which a campus (and English department) deals with that requirement reflects both the programmatic nature of its lower-division writing course, and the relative interest and knowledge on the part of English and non-English faculty. We do not believe, however, that it is unreasonable to expect differences in awareness and involvement to be reflected in differences in students' writing performance.

Common Essay Readings. A second, related issue that arises from our work concerns the writing faculty. We have found the distinction between part-time contract instructors and regular tenured faculty omnipresent, not only in terms of categories we generated and used in our work, but also in the descriptions offered by composition program coordinators. We detect (and largely share) a bias, based upon an as yet unfounded assumption, i.e., that tenured faculty know less about new writing theory. And, we find corollary assumptions, e.g., that tenured faculty are less competent writing instructors, that they need "retraining," that they need to be monitored or evaluated. At the same time, we find real limits to the extent of program coordinators' authority and power of persuasion over regular faculty. We find new assurances and fewer mechanisms for assuring a common core of curriculum and instructional methods for composition courses. Thus it appears that the presence of regular literature faculty in the staffing of composition courses

greatly affects the likelihood of establishing and maintaining that elusive "program of instruction" we have been seeking.

Our data indicate that formal attempts to unite the part-timers and tenured instructors, formal attempts at faculty development in the field of composition, documents prescribing course content, sequence, recommended texts, all do not succeed. Nevertheless, on our checklist of program features we found a diamond in the rough, the common mid-term or final essay exam. Where remedial or regular composition courses have common essays, we find interaction between part-timers and tenured faculty, informational gains on the part of the uninformed, reported impact on actual classroom practices, and ultimately greater commonality among course sections taught by the different instructors. However, it also appears that what makes this activity so successful is its indirectness. It is not perceived as faculty retraining, nor as a means of standardizing course content and instructional methods.

In short, it appears that the common exam operates as the perfect "consciousness raising" activity. We find this phenomenon can also occur outside the English department for campuses whose upper-division writing requirement specifies a common exam across various departments' certification courses.

Recommendations to Researchers and Evaluators

We would like to draw these points together into some coherent set of recommendations for present and future

investigations of college writing programs. First, we need to realize that there are major assumptions we all hold, e.g., that English literature professors should be seriously interested in college composition, which has heretofore been a General Education course offered by literature departments. Accordingly, we must be aware of the impact of those assumptions in study methods and data analysis: expectations of and searches for faculty knowledge about composition theory; and concern for documenting instructional content, methods, and materials, as indicators of that knowledge transformed into practice.

Second, we urge consideration of the larger context, the campus in which the program operates. Our Phase I research experiences suggest that characteristics such as minority group enrollments or campus size are less crucial than the administration and resources: policies affecting writing instruction, alternative sources of instruction in composition, non-English department faculty involvement in writing instruction, and demonstrated campus administrator support of writing programs and policies.

Third, we recommend the abandonment of any notions of ranking or ordinal measures for describing programs. We have had to recognize that our attempts to do so result in lots of binary variables: things exist or they don't. Often, activities or structures that exist on any one campus are not found on any other. Instead, we find our descriptions

involve more information with nominal categories. We can distinguish among types of activities which are grouped together by virtue of their focus. For instance, there are many different versions of formal faculty development; but distinctions among the approaches are simply different "ways of doing," not more or less, or better or worse, versions of the same basic approach.

Next Steps

In 1983 we are gathering student essays and attitude data from students at the end of their freshman composition class for each of the three possible school terms (fall, winter and spring quarters; and fall and spring semesters). We will be using these student data to explore the demonstrable impact of differences we have uncovered in attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of program faculty, and in structures, policies, and processes in the program and on campus.

Though not included in this report, we have just finished the analysis of faculty factors describing attitudes and instructional practices, and are gratified to find the hypothesized "between program" differences do exist, as do differences between faculty status for contract lecturers and tenured/tenure-track instructors. Further, we find indications that interactions between campus and status also affect beliefs and practices of our faculty sample. In short, our descriptive phase has successfully provided us with several key factors and hypotheses about the impact of

those factors which we may test out against student "outcome" data currently being collected. We, thus, fully expect our next report to contain data-based findings and recommendations for practice.